

Brill's Companion to the Reception of Alexander the Great

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Brill's Companion to the Reception of Alexander the Great

Edited by

K.R. Moore



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Preface

Given the title of this *Companion*, it seems appropriate to begin in a Socratic manner by querying just what constitutes a “reception” of Alexander the Great. The answer to that could potentially end up being as divisive as the varied interpretations of the Conqueror himself. Would, for example, any instance of someone being named Alexander (or Alexandra) after 323 BC amount to some kind of reception of the Macedonian monarch? It might if those who named them had our Alexander in mind at the time. Josephus famously tells us that the Jews named all newborn males in honour of him in the year that he peacefully annexed their territory from the Persian Empire, and forms of his name have continued to be quite popular in Jewish culture up to the present day. That was clearly an intentional “reception” of some description. In terms of academic scholarship, which occupies a major portion of this *Companion*, traditional reception theory might be inclined to somewhat relocate primary sources to a lesser role, treating them as having only served in the shaping of later receptions. But, in Alexander Studies, we are often painfully aware that all of our extant primary sources are themselves receptions of earlier sources that are no longer available. To that end, it only seems appropriate to include the likes of Arrian, Plutarch, Diodorus and Rufus as specific, albeit profoundly influential, receptions of Alexander the Great. Each author was the product of his own era and cultural/historical context. Each “received” Alexander, based on the scholarship and evidence available to him, in his own unique way and according to his individual character and inclinations.

A considerable number of the contributions to this *Companion* deal, quite understandably, with a wide range of scholarly receptions, especially those from the *circa* AD 18th century onwards. And that is highly appropriate. But receptions of Alexander the Great go much further beyond these. In seeking authors and topics, the editor has cast his nets far and wide in an attempt to encompass the vastness of such receptions. They include, for example, the history of art (ancient and modern) and areas of “popular culture” in which the Macedonian Conqueror has fired the imagination and continues to do so. He has been, since his own era, the subject of countless paintings, sculptures and other works of art. These have, in most instances, been deployed for political or other specific purposes by their creators and patrons, with some having been reclaimed by a more democratic audience. They are clearly identifiable as valid receptions worthy of study. He also finds his way into popular music and poetry as well—not to mention, in the modern era, all sorts of media including drama, films, television, the internet and computer games. His image has been used by

religious groups, both eastern and western, ancient and modern, for various ends. Ownership of his legacy is still fought over in his native land. Alexander's *Nachleben*, or "afterlife", through such receptions has been at least as active as, and definitively longer-lived than, his brief but spectacular career as a world conqueror. And he continues to live on through these revised images in often strange and surprising ways.

In order to address such an extensive array of receptions, this *Companion* has turned out to be quite a sizeable and lengthy piece of scholarship. It is by no means comprehensive as it would take a whole library of considerable capacity to contain all possible receptions of Alexander. Even so, the contributors were chosen to reflect the breadth of the subject as well as to provide sufficiently varied material as to appeal to a wide range of scholarly interests. Hopefully there will be something for everyone here—from Classicists and Ancient Historians to Medievalists and Art Historians, from Media Studies to Political Science and Military History, and many others still beyond these.

However, as editor my rationale in selecting these topics and contributors was not merely to canvass Alexander Studies generally and without any structured purpose. I teach Alexander at university and have devoted quite a bit of time and effort to research and publication in this area. And I have shaped this volume with the express intent of supplementing the needs of those who want to advance their research and understanding of the subject. There is still much to be done on Alexander and this *Companion* cannot hope to amount to the "be all and end all" of the matter. That would, I think, be impossible for any such work. We, the editor and contributors, have at best here added something further of interest to the ongoing conversation about Alexander. As such, it will go a significant way towards enhancing our understanding and will provide new tools and resources for others to use in their own research in the future. I have to that end sought out a mixed group of academics to produce the chapters in this volume. Some are well-known, established scholars whose continuing work on Alexander represents the culmination of years of research and effort. Their productions are most welcome and very necessary. But I have also quite deliberately pursued a number of up-and-coming authors, often just having completed their PhDs, in order to provide a fresh perspective, which I believe the subject greatly needs and from which we may all reap considerable benefits. I have also been especially keen that the contributors be as broadly international in origin as possible, within reason. This too I maintain is necessary in order to represent both the diversity of the receptions as well as to serve as an illustration of just how immense and far-reaching is the subject being considered. I only regret that more could not have been included, but a two-volume *Companion* already approaches Colossus as it stands.

Let me add in closing that working on Brill's *Companion to the Reception of Alexander the Great* has been an honour and a privilege. Just editing all of these chapters alone has enhanced my own knowledge of the subject more than I could have hoped. I have met and corresponded with such an amazing group of extraordinary individuals, all unified by the common thread of Alexander, that I have felt grateful, humbled and occasionally awestruck. What follows represents, I maintain, examples of the best and brightest in their attempts to tackle this complex and immense subject in their own unique ways. I also assert that both those who wrote these chapters as well as those who may read them, whatever their view of the Conqueror, are all in some sense latter-day Companions of Alexander. All of us here bear that burden with grace and poise. Some are clearly still fighting over his incorruptible corpse, much as did his original Companions after his early demise. For others, he is very much still living, reigning and ruling the cosmos and will continue to do so through the efforts of those who carry him, so to speak, to this very day and beyond. I also feel the need to offer one final caveat for anyone who finds themselves caught up in Alexander's retinue. He will always remain, in some sense, forever young, filled with boundless energy and driven by his divine *pothos* to perpetually outdo himself, albeit vicariously now, through the imaginations and efforts of others. Working on this *Companion* has taught me (as if I did not already suspect it) that Alexander the Great is immortal through his constant reinvention and reception by each generation. But while he never grows old or perishes, being an idea more so than a man, the rest of us are indeed highly subject to those corporeal defects. And he has a way of wearing out mere mortals such as ourselves. In particular, I should like to give honourable mention to the late Professor A.B. Bosworth, with whom I originally spoke about writing this foreword, and who had been keen to do it, but who has since, to the greatest sadness of the scholarly community, joined the subject of much of his excellent scholarship in the great beyond. So, reader beware. You have been duly warned. Even so, most of us consider it the greatest of honours to partake of Alexander's superlative legacy, if only in a small way, clutching our own little speck of his vast fortune, to have our names, albeit fleetingly, connected with his. There are far worse ways to spend one's time. Though I can predict, I think with some accuracy, that if there is anyone around in another twenty three centuries hence, they will even then likely be talking about and debating Alexander. The rest of us can only hope to be so fortunate.

K.R. Moore

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K.R. Moore

Ken Moore is a senior lecturer in the History of Ideas and, at the time of writing this chapter, the programme leader (BA Hons) of the History section at Teesside University, Middlesbrough, UK (for his sins). He is first and foremost a student of Platonic philosophy and 5th–4th century BC Athens and has come to the study of Alexander somewhat obliquely by that route. He teaches a third-year class titled “Images of Alexander” in which especial emphasis is placed on the historiographical issues in Alexander scholarship and for which, hopefully, this chapter and this *Companion* will each be a welcome aid.

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Alexandra Morris is pursuing a graduate degree in Museum Studies at New York University (2016). She was a Presidential Scholar at the State University of New York at Potsdam, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with a triple major

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PART 1

Ancient Greek, Roman and Persian Receptions



Framing the Debate

K.R. Moore

Treason doth never prosper: what's the reason?
Why, if it prosper, none dare call it treason.

SIR JOHN HARINGTON (4 August 1561–20 November 1612)¹



The *Latin Vulgate Bible's* apocryphal first book of *Esdras* states that Cyrus the Great of Persia, a figure in whom the subject of this investigation would be keenly interested, was suitably impressed by the position of the governor of the province of Yehud Medinata, the Hebrew prince Zerubbabel, to the effect—*Magna est veritas et praevalet* (“Great is the truth, and it prevails”)—that he permitted the captive Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild their destroyed Temple.² Still, it seems that even the truth, however great, cannot quite prevail over Alexander III of Macedon, the Great. His victorious record remains intact, if not unequivocal, despite 2,300+ years of near constant engagement on the battlefield of academia. Since we are concerned with his reception here, it is obligatory to concede that we may never know the “real” Alexander, if he may be said to exist anywhere at all. Much of that which we can hope to attain as the “truth” persists only among his myriad receptions. Even so, I feel that I ought to allow also that the level of reasonably considered information obtainable from receptions, and especially from those closest to his own era, does offer us fleeting glimpses into his world and its major events. Those glimpses beckon scholarly champions, driving them into the affray, to both discover and to reshape the life and times of Alexander. It is also clear that some receptions, being so heavily influenced by their own respective *Zeitgeist* and agendas, border on solipsism; although this too affords volumes about our

¹ *Epigrams*, Book IV, Epistle 5. Cp. “*Prosperum ac felix scelus / Virtus vocatur*” (“Successful and fortunate crime / is called virtue”), Seneca, *Hercules Furens*, 11.250.

² 1 *Esdras* 4:41; between 538 and 520 BC

forebears and their eras. We like to think that contemporary scholarship is more objective. And rightly so. Yet, disputes still abound and are often particularly related to their analogues stemming both directly and by diverse routes from the time of the Macedonian Conqueror.

The contributions that follow this chapter will explore many such receptions of Alexander the Great. They have been chosen to reflect the range and scale of the impact that scarcely a third of a century of prodigiously historical activity has inflicted on a world that would itself be significantly transformed and fashioned in consequence of those very events. They will likewise explore various ongoing historical debates about these topics. The aim of this chapter, as its title suggests, is to “frame the debate” around Alexander. Of course, that statement is misleading, as there are and have been numerous debates about him and it would be impossible to treat them all in this or any volume. Indeed, the Great Library of Alexandria itself would just begin to contain them all. What I intend to do here is to look closely at three selected “episodes”, presented throughout our primary sources, and examine some of the major arguments and debates concerning them within subsequent historiographical traditions. Such contested points will be illuminated when considered in context and with regard to trends in scholarship; but they will also be seen to have taken on a kind of *Nachleben* of their own, metatextually interacting with one another, echoing and being distorted—and sometimes even clarified—through the actions of time and the whims of fortune. However, I also feel compelled to add that, whatever this chapter’s (or indeed this *Companion*’s) claims to any objectivity or “truth” concerning Alexander the Great, it should be acknowledged that this is, after all, ultimately just another reception, at best a post-scripted footnote to an obscure passage buried deep within a grand narrative which is itself mostly lost, in no small part imagined and perpetually contested.

Framing the contentious debate(s) around Alexander, what he intended and what he signified, also requires choices to be made about which topics to examine and which to omit. Thus yet another “Alexander” is here born to add to the growing legion that, if its inmates could somehow step beyond the written page and the minds that conceive them, might comprise an army larger than that, reported in our sources, of Dareius III, King of Kings, near Issus in November of 333 BC. So, let us then receive this new Alexander, with fanfare appropriate to his station, taking up our own panoply of scholarly arms and banners. The episodes to be scrutinized in this chapter will be the assassination of Alexander’s father Philip II of Macedon in 336, followed by the infamous razing of Thebes by Alexander in 335 and, finally, the fate of his historian Callisthenes of Olynthus in 327. Understandably, if regrettably, it is from the more grisly incidents credited to Alexander that the most heated debates have

tended to arise and I ask the reader to pardon my dwelling upon such grisly particulars, for they are highly revealing. This chapter could also quite readily consider many more examples were there sufficient space and time. Such would, however, require at least a book and will be omitted, if occasionally referenced. I am aware too that this is well-trodden, scholarly ground; yet a reappraisal of these points is, I think, important, by way of illustration. Looming large in all of these incidents and their receptions is what I consider to be the overarching debate: whether Alexander the Great was in fact just a 'Lucky Tyrant' or, in some sense, a beneficent 'Civilizer', a preeminent promoter of the 'Unity of (Hu)Mankind'. Of course the truth, whatever that is, will always be stranger and more complex.

In the summer of 336 BC, Philip II of Macedon was publicly assassinated during the wedding ceremony of his daughter Cleopatra to Alexander I, the Molossian client-king of Epirus, at the ancient Macedonian capital of Aegae, by one Pausanias, the son of Cerastus, with a Celtic dagger. The latter was captain of Philip's personal bodyguards and he clearly had some kind of grievance against his king. This pivotal event was arguably the first true test of Alexander's premiership and one which he passed, being acclaimed king by the Macedonian people under arms. He dealt promptly with a number of rivals and then set out to govern his realm and expand it. A debate nonetheless arose around Alexander's potential culpability in the untimely demise of his father. And this first episode that I am considering deftly exhibits the sheer perplexity encountered when trying to pin down precisely what happened in any key event for which we have information relating to Alexander's thirteen-year, epic reign.

Beginning with the ancient sources then, Plutarch (ca. A.D. 46–120), the Platonist priest of Apollo at Delphi, sometime magistrate of Chaeronea and popular biographer of famous Greeks and Romans, gives us only a passing explanation of the episode. He is likely drawing on Cleitarchus' (mid to late 3rd century BC) now lost, but by all accounts exceedingly popular, *History of Alexander*, which was probably written between 310 and 301 in Alexandria, perhaps around the same time as Ptolemy was writing his own *History*. Cleitarchus, the son of an historian named Deinon, is chiefly associated with his home city of Alexandria and not thought to have been personally present on the Persian expedition.³ He probably accessed the overly flattering *History* of Callisthenes (ca. 360–328 BC) as a main source, along with tales gleaned from interview-

3 Waldemar Heckel, *Who's Who in the Age of Alexander the Great* (London: Blackwell, 2006), 86.

ing Macedonian veterans living in Egypt at the time.⁴ Neither he nor Callisthenes were reported to have witnessed the assassination of Philip; although the latter may have been there, given his close association with the Macedonian court.

Plutarch relates the tale of Pausanias having been sexually outraged by Attalus, one of Philip's leading generals, (or under his auspices) perhaps up to eight years prior to the assassination and, having had no redress from the king, was seething in his desire for vengeance.⁵ Diodorus, drawing mostly on Cleitarchus, gives a fuller account to which I shall return in detail. It is unclear why the assassin chose this moment, out of so many earlier opportunities, to exact his retribution. Persian gold, royal intrigues and the influence of the Athenian leader Demosthenes have all been advanced as causal factors but never adequately demonstrated.⁶ Certainly Alexander proceeded from the official position that the Persians were involved. Diodorus states that Pausanias was urged on to his treason by a hitherto unknown sophist named Hermocrates.⁷ Plutarch adds, without giving his own opinion, that "it was Olympias who was chiefly blamed for the assassination, because she was believed to have encouraged the youth and incited him to revenge".⁸ She undoubtedly had grievances of her own, having fallen from grace as "first" wife and Queen and having endured exile and estrangement.⁹ But does that make her guilty? A hint of culpability is also aimed at Alexander insofar as Plutarch indicates that Pausanias went to him with his complaints against Attalus, possibly at the time of the affront, whereupon Alexander, at the age of about twelve, is said to have referenced the topic of internecine revenge-murder, quoting from Euripides' *Medea* (289), "The bride, the groom and the bride-giver". But these words, if true, are open to much interpretation. At any rate, if Alexander actually said them, it was years before the actual assassination when Philip's future bride, Attalus' niece, would have been about nine and presumably before the eventual wedding with Philip

4 See Paul Cartledge, *Alexander the Great: the Hunt for a New Past* (London: Macmillan, 2005), 243 ff.

5 Aristotle *Politics* 1311b1–2, supports this account.

6 Heckel, *Who's Who*, 110–111.

7 Diodorus Siculus *Library of World History* XVI.9; this Hermocrates may have been the teacher of Callimachus the Alexandrian poet, for which see Funaioli, *Real-Encyclopädie*, VIII, 1920, col. 887 ff.

8 Plutarch *Alexander* X.4.

9 See W.W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1956), 3 ff.; and cp. Cartledge, *Alexander*, 61 ff.

had even been arranged (337 or 338 BC),¹⁰ which makes it seem like this anecdote “may well have been invented after the fact” as a revisionist postscript by antagonistic sources.¹¹ That is, it would be unless Pausanias approached Alexander around the time of the wedding to Attalus’ niece, but this is never clarified and it seems odd, though not impossible, that he would wait so long to seek help from the prince.

Plutarch accessed both the Vulgate (mainly Cleitarchus the Alexandrian historian, Onisicritus the helmsman and sensationalist, Chares of Mytilene who was Alexander’s court-marshal, and sometimes Callisthenes, personal historian to the king) and the Official (mainly Pharaoh Ptolemy I Soter, Aristobolus the engineer, Nearchus the fleet admiral and, again, Callisthenes) traditions of Alexander scholarship but it seems clear that the most detailed account of the murder of Philip must come exclusively from the Vulgate sources and especially Cleitarchus. Arrian of Nicomedia (ca. A.D. 86/89–after 146/160) only briefly mentions the death of the king in 336, and we can assume that Ptolemy, himself still in exile at the time over his involvement in the Pixodarus Affair, to be presently considered, either did not discuss it in his lost book, which was Arrian’s main source, or only did so, as with Arrian, in passing.¹² The claim of Olympias’ involvement probably originated, in the early historiography at least, with Cleitarchus.¹³ The 1st century BC historian Diodorus Siculus, another who draws chiefly on the Vulgate tradition and Cleitarchus in particular, gives a much more detailed account of Pausanias’ grievance against, and animosity for, Philip but notably does not lay any blame on Olympias or Alexander.¹⁴ Quintus Curtius Rufus (ca. A.D. 1st century), another Vulgate writer, is muted on this topic since it would have been covered in his missing books; although, one suspects that he might have repeated or expanded upon the anti-Alexandrian calumnies. The final ancient source to address this matter is Justin’s *Epitome* of the *Philippic History* of Pompeius Trogus. There is much debate about when Justin lived (probably A.D. 2nd century) but Trogus, a Romanized Gaul, was writing roughly at the same time as Diodorus and likewise following Cleitarchus and the Vulgate tradition.¹⁵ And Trogus (and/or

10 Peter Green, *Alexander of Macedon, 356–323 BC: A Historical Biography* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

11 Philip Freeman, *Alexander the Great* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011), 42.

12 Arrian *Anabasis* I.1.

13 Andrew Young, *The Lost Book of Alexander the Great* (Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing LLC, 2014), 14–15.

14 Diodorus XVI.94.1–4.

15 Cartledge, *Alexander*, 279.

Justin) too lays blame on Olympias, who he says even provided the getaway horses, obliquely blaming Alexander as well. Justin indicates that “it is also believed that he [Pausanias] was encouraged to it by Olympias ... and that Alexander himself was not ignorant of the murder of his father.”¹⁶ It is difficult to say whether this further accusation originated from Cleitarchus, Trogus or Justin himself (or some hitherto unknown text). The fact that Diodorus omitted it may tell us more about his own inclinations, that he was more favourable to Alexander through admiration of him, much as with Plutarch, rather than revealing the source of this purported intelligence.¹⁷ He may have also made a critical choice based on his researches. Even if he was favourable to Alexander, the omission of the queen as a suspect is telling. It does seem clear that the allegations of Alexander and Olympias’ culpability derive almost exclusively from the Vulgate tradition rather than the Official, which is to be expected.¹⁸

Amongst the modern receptions, the difference of opinion manifests along similar lines but with greater magnitude. A good place to begin is with Sir William Woodthorpe Tarn (26 February 1869–7 November 1957). Granted, one could look to George Grote (17 November 1794–18 June 1871) or a range of earlier sources that partake of the long tradition of Alexander scholarship; however, others in this volume will address these far better in their chapters and I shall not infringe too much on their bailiwicks. Tarn, along with his rival the Austrian-born Ernst Badian (8 August 1925–1 February 2011), effectively laid the groundwork for the modern debates and most scholars in the later 20th and early-21st centuries have followed on, often quite closely, from these. In his tersely concise prose, Tarn writes:

Antipater’s attitude absolutely acquits Alexander of complicity. Olympias may have been privy to the plot; but the only evidence against her is Antipater’s subsequent enmity to her, for our tradition on the subject derives from Cassander’s propaganda later.¹⁹

16 Justin *Epitome* IX.7.1–2.

17 Cartledge, *Alexander*, 256. As Prof. Ian Worthington has kindly pointed out to me, there has been extensive scholarship done on Diodorus, Rufus and Justin in particular which has examined the “conspiracy theory” that they propose; see e.g. R. Develin, “The Murder of Philip II”, *Antichthon* 15 (1981): 86–99 and below.

18 See Edward M. Anson, *Alexander the Great: Themes and Issues* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 74–77.

19 Tarn, *Alexander*, 3; see Anson, *Alexander*, 81 in support of Antipater’s stance on Alexander.

I will address Cassander's alleged influences more below. Tarn's position is disputed by Badian who develops an elaborate conspiracy theory making Alexander, with the help of his mother, the originator of the regicide.²⁰ Paul Cartledge, almost half a century later, would echo that view. He begins tentatively enough, exploring the possibility as a hypothetical exercise, but by his third reason in favour of Alexander's complicity (having Pausanias killed rather than put on trial), Cartledge seems convinced. However, perhaps grudgingly, he comments that the case against him is "cumulatively impressive, but not proven beyond a shadow of reasonable doubt"; he nonetheless states that Alexander "benefitted the most" from Philip's death.²¹

Even so, it is also easy enough to find reputable, modern scholars who argue that Alexander had relatively little to gain by Philip's murder, that the king's sudden demise could have potentially weakened his position and thrown open a power struggle that he was by no means guaranteed to win.²² Some even argue, based on Alexander's piety as attested in a range of sources that parricide, with its associated *miasma*, would have been unthinkable to the highly religious prince.²³ This depends, of course, upon whether one believes him to have actually been religious or whether, more cynically, he used religion purely as a means to political power.²⁴ Some combination of the two might be closer to the truth but there can be no doubt that the stain of parricide would have been damning if provable.²⁵ It is also the case that Alexander's relationship with his father had suffered at times. This was due in part to Philip's marriage into Attalus' family in 338 or early 337, as this general appears to have held Alexander in contempt. Attalus, in his cups after the wedding, reportedly "called upon the Macedonians to beseech the gods that from Philip and Cleopatra might be born a legitimate successor to the kingdom" thus insulting Alexander, who became livid at the remarks.²⁶ Plutarch reports that he was about to come to blows with Attalus when Philip, also very drunk,

20 Ernst Badian, "Death of Philip II", *Phoenix* 17 (1963): 244–250; Ernst Badian, "Conspiracies", in *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction*, eds. A.B. Bosworth and E.J. Baynam (London: Oxford University Press, 2000), 54–56.

21 Cartledge, *Alexander*, 63–65, 13.

22 Mary Renault, *The Nature of Alexander* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Books, 1975), 62–63; his success was hardly a foregone conclusion; Anson, *Alexander*, 79.

23 See Anson, *Alexander*, 79.

24 Such as asking the priests at Siwah if his father's murder had been avenged.

25 See Ernst Fredricksmeier, "Alexander's Religion and Divinity", in *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great*, ed. Joseph Roisman (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 253 ff.

26 Plutarch *Alexander*, IX.4–5.

arose and drew his sword only to fall down and be subjected to Alexander's ridicule, with the latter saying "Look now, men! Here is one who was preparing to cross from Europe into Asia; yet he is distressed in trying to cross from couch to couch!"²⁷ Alexander then took his mother to Epirus and went himself to Illyria in self-imposed exile.²⁸ What was he doing there? The Illyrians had been responsible for the death of Philip's favourite, the second Pausanias. Was Alexander courting them for political support? It remains uncertain but could have been seen as damning evidence against Alexander by his detractors—except that he does not appear to have fomented rebellion among these people and did not return with an army to overthrow his father.²⁹

The Pixodarus Affair is another incident that reveals tensions between father and son.³⁰ Alexander, with help from his closest friends, had derailed Philip's plan to marry off his half-brother, Arrhidaeus, to the daughter of the Satrap of Caria by offering himself as bridegroom instead. Ruzicka places this episode as occurring while Alexander was still in Illyria, probably in 337.³¹ Philip persuaded his son to return, although a number of the prince's closest companions, including our Ptolemy, were sent into exile by the king for their unsanctioned and potentially quite reckless involvement in foreign affairs. Contrary to Badian's position, Philip appears to have thought very highly of his son, considering him unequivocally as heir-apparent.³² Not only was Philip instrumental in obtaining his return to court, after putting a halt to any marriage arrangement with the Carian, but Alexander was also sufficiently important in his father's eyes not to be pawned off on a Persian noble who had been a bitter enemy in 340. Philip had reserved that honour for his reportedly half-witted son Arrhidaeus, who was apparently never intended to inherit the throne, in order to cement ties of friendship with a former opponent.³³ At least, that is one perspective represented in our sources both ancient and modern. Caria was a

27 Ibid.

28 Plutarch *Alexander* 1X.4–5; Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 557d–e; Justin 1X.7.2–5.

29 See Develin, "The Murder of Philip II", 95–96.

30 Plutarch *Alexander* X.1–3.

31 Stephen Ruzicka, "The 'Pixodarus Affair' Reconsidered Again", in *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*, eds. E. Carney and D. Ogden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 10, although this is contested; see his notes *passim*; and see Plutarch *Alexander* 1X.6.

32 Ruzicka, "The 'Pixodarus Affair'", 8; see Ian Worthington, *By the Spear: Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Rise and Fall of the Macedonian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 113–115, who agrees that Alexander's position was relatively secure.

33 See Anson, *Alexander*, 76–77.

vast and wealthy realm—and it had twice thwarted Philip's efforts for expansion. Alliance by marriage would have been a masterstroke and the weighty implications of the arrangement clearly provoked some anxiety in Alexander, precipitating his ultimately abortive interference in his father's plans. It also suggests, as A. Morris discusses in her chapter of this *Companion*, that Arrhidaeus was perhaps not quite so "half-witted" as the sources report (he did, after all, eventually live to become Philip III, albeit under a cloud). The proposed Carian alliance was a diplomatic manoeuvre typical of Philip and it speaks volumes that he forgave his son for scuppering such an important deal. In consequence, Alexander's position seems to have been fairly secure. Any child of the king by Attalus' niece, however purely Macedonian, would be years from becoming a suitable successor, if it ever did; whereas, the half-Epirote Alexander, who had successfully acted as regent in his father's absence at the age of sixteen and commanded the left wing of the Macedonian army at Chaeronea in 338, had proven himself fit for rule time and again. This was affirmed by his restoration to favour even after the episode with Attalus and the ruinous Pixodarus Affair. Family tensions and headstrong children are universal phenomena but they do not automatically equate to plots of murder.

Many others have added their voices to this "trial by historians" of Alexander and Olympias and it would take considerable time to go through them all. Mary Renault has even asserted that it would be a "waste of space to re-examine" the debate.³⁴ That may be going a bit far but this case does serve to illustrate that one can, as Badian, Cartledge and others have done, construct an elaborate edifice of reasoned suspicion and supposition to back up a claim of complicity.³⁵ For example, Robin Lane Fox argues that "for Olympias, the murder had been timed and planned ideally; Philip was killed at the wedding designed to discard her"; he considers Alexander's potential involvement too but argues that it amounts largely to "speculation", saying that it is "Olympias who remains most suspect".³⁶ Develin too, partaking of a considerable historiographical tradition on this that has in part 'spun off' from the seminal work of Jack Ellis, is somewhat less assertive but does point out that Orestes had ties with Epirus (though the Lyncestians did not).³⁷ He argues that she may have

34 Ibid.

35 Cartledge, *Alexander*, 16, 64 & *passim*.

36 Robin Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 23–25; but see Elizabeth Carney, "Women in Alexander's Court" in *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great*, ed. Joseph Roisman (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 39 ff. for a fuller discussion this.

37 See J.R. Ellis, "Amyntas Perdikka, Philip II and Alexander the Great: A study in Conspiracy", *JHS* 91 (1971), 15–24; *Philip II and Macedonian Imperialism*, London: Thames and Hudson,

been involved in the murder in order to restore her personal standing since Philip had made a new alliance-by-marriage with her brother's kingdom that did not depend upon herself. He insinuates that the "occasion suited Olympias admirably", while exculpating Alexander, saying "We can believe that he was in a state of mind to welcome Philip's death, but he could be left unaware of Olympias' plot—it was better that way".³⁸ Even so, if the original allegation in the sources comes from Cleitarchus, as it appears to have done, then this view may have been derived from the gossip of the common soldiers, who probably were not privy to all the facts. It almost certainly gained momentum after Alexander's death when Cassander's anti-Olympias propaganda may have also informed and influenced such gossip and, as we shall see, at a time when Egypt had a special relationship with the pro-Cassander Peripatetics.³⁹ In addition to politically opposing Cassander, Olympias would execute his brother, Nicanor, claiming that she was avenging Cassander's reputed involvement in her son's demise.⁴⁰ It is noteworthy that Alexander himself was never implicated in the murder of his father during his lifetime, to our knowledge, even in the latter part of his Asiatic campaign when a number of his subordinates were accusing him of a great many wrongdoings.

The assassin Pausanias may not have acted alone, but "our sources primarily describe the murder as of a very personal nature".⁴¹ While successful, this could also explain why no higher, political goals were achieved such as bringing Philip's nephew, Amyntas Perdicca, son of the previous king and Philip's brother, Perdiccas III, to power.⁴² It seems more like revenge than *coup d'état*. Pausanias was a royal bodyguard from Orestis who Diodorus indicates was at least at one point "beloved of the king" and apparently quite jealous of other would-be beloveds.⁴³ If true, then that establishes a special relationship between the murderer and his monarch that casts a particular light on

1976; "The Assassination of Philip II," in *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honor of Charles F. Edson* (Thessaloniki 1981), 99–137.; J.R. Fears, "Pausanias, the Assassin of Philip II", *Athenaeum* 53 (1975), 111–135; P. Green, *Alexander of Macedon*, 1992.

38 Develin, "The Murder of Philip II", 99.

39 See James Waterfield, *Dividing the Spoils: The War for Alexander the Great's Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 88–91.

40 Diodorus XIX.11.8; see too Heckel, *Who's Who*, 176–177.

41 Anson, *Alexander*, 74; Aristotle *Politics* 1311b1, supports Diodorus' position that Pausanias acted alone.

42 Not being Argeads, any claim of theirs was tenuous, but they could have supported Amyntas who would have then been favourably disposed towards them; see Arrian *Events After Alexander* 1.22; Justin XI.6.14; Polyaeus VIII.60 and Plutarch *Moralia* 327c.

43 Diodorus XVI.93.2–4.

Philip's failure to redress his reputed outrage by Attalus. According to Diodorus' version, Pausanias had fallen out of favour as the king's lover and had then proceeded to embark on a 'smear campaign' against his replacement, another youth also named Pausanias who was a friend of Attalus and who is reported to have later died in a battle against the Illyrians.⁴⁴ Diodorus asserts that his death was actually suicide as a result of the other Pausanias' unbearable defamations against him.⁴⁵ Perhaps out of a sense of outrage, Attalus "plied him [Pausanias] with un-mixed drink" and handed the future regicide over to his mule drivers to have their way with him. This happened approximately eight or nine years prior to Philip's assassination. Plutarch says the rapists were fellow "revellers" at the party; Diodorus refers to them as Attalus' "mule drivers".⁴⁶ They could have easily been both. Pausanias was a teenager and a Royal Page at that point rather than captain of the bodyguards, as he would be at the time of the murder.⁴⁷ He was also an aristocrat, with a high sense of personal worth and privilege. And he had been raped—not just raped, but drugged by a superior and gang-raped perhaps by social inferiors—and had received no justice from Philip who had been at once probably his lover and was unquestionably a "father figure" as his king and commander. In terms of the latter's declining to redress the wrong, possibly Philip felt that the slanderous youth had received his just desserts. Now, we cannot know what went through Pausanias' mind, but a traumatic experience like that was bound to leave a profound impact, and Diodorus' reports suggest he was given to emotional extremes. One may postulate that he nursed this grievance throughout the intervening years; he probably dwelt upon it to an unhealthy degree, let it eat away at him. We should perhaps feel some pity for Pausanias, although there can be no justification for his actions.

We also cannot know whether Olympias, Alexander, or others who knew of these events, took advantage through 'poisoned' words of encouragement; but, the wedding at Aegae marked an acme in Philip's career and seeing his king at this moment, dressed in shining white robes, being honoured like a god at the height of his power and prestige, could have easily been the last proverbial straw. Pausanias might have got his revenge at any time, or never, but the moment was ripe for it. Some premeditation seems likely. He would have had time to prepare, being chief bodyguard and knowing the royal itinerary in detail. Diodorus' account does suggest some degree of planning as the assassin reportedly had horses readied for a swift getaway, failing to reach them in time

44 See Freeman, *Alexander*, 39–40.

45 Diodorus XVI.93.6; he called him an hermaphrodite, amongst other things.

46 Plutarch *Alexander*, 10; Diodorus XVI.93.2–4.

47 Heckel, *Who's Who*, 193–194.

only because he tripped on a vine in his precipitous flight and fell.⁴⁸ Justin alone, as indicated above, suggests that Olympias herself had organized the escape animals. If Diodorus is reporting correctly, then this was more than a sudden psychological episode and appears to have been planned to make Philip's fall all the more tragically ironic in the context of his celebratory accolades.

The apparent, summary execution of the regicide without trial might have been absolutely necessary in order to cement Alexander's position as heir-apparent; but he may not have had any choice in the matter. A murder had been witnessed by the assembled multitude and the killer was manifestly guilty. Today we would expect a lengthy forensic investigation and trial by jury. Had Pausanias been spared at that moment for a future trial, on Alexander's order, this might have actually implicated Alexander in his crimes by providing the assassin with an opportunity for escape, which could well have happened.⁴⁹ Swift action seems to have been required—Pausanias was clearly 'resisting arrest' by fleeing—and justice needed to be seen to have been done. Yet we do not even know for certain that Alexander had anything directly to do with Pausanias' execution. Diodorus says that Perdikkas, Leonnatus and Attalus (probably the son of Andromenes, not Philip's father-in-law who was in Asia with Parmenion leading the spearhead invasion) killed him with javelins—and Alexander is not mentioned as being among them.⁵⁰ Plutarch alludes to Alexander hunting down "others" considered to have been involved in the plot, suggesting there might have been a conspiracy of some kind, but nowhere are we explicitly told that he personally ordered the execution of his father's killer.⁵¹

Pausanias was from Orestis, a region of upper Macedonia corresponding roughly to the modern-day Kastoria district, which had been assimilated by Philip after a series of bloody battles. Leonnatus has sometimes been thought to have also come from Orestis; however, Fox and Heckel have demonstrated that he was a relative of Eurydice, the mother of Philip II, and therefore a

48 Diodorus XVI.94.3–4.

49 A fragmentary source, *P. Oxy.* 1798, implies that Pausanias was actually tried and executed; but this is not borne out by our other sources, especially Justin XI.2.1; see. U. Wilcken, *Alexander der Grosse und die indischen Gymnosophisten* (Berlin: SB preuss Akad. D. Wiss., 1923), 151ff. for this position and see too Bradford Welles, ed. & trans., *Diodorus Siculus' Library of World History, Books XVI.66–XVII* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 101, n. 2, in his commentary on Diodorus XVI, for his refutation of it.

50 Diodorus XVI.94.4.

51 Plutarch *Alexander*, X.4.

member of the Lycestian 'royal line', which itself had been thwarted in its aspirations for agnatic control of the crown of Macedon by Philip in his earlier rise to supremacy.⁵² This Attalus was Perdiccas' brother-in-law and both men were nobles from Orestis. Conspiracy hunters may argue that they killed him to silence his bearing witness to their involvement in the plot which, given Perdiccas' eventual role as *somatophylax* of, and *diadochus* to, Alexander, could be seen to implicate him if true; but there is no proof of such a plot beyond the implication. Indeed, most of the individuals present among the royal retinue at Aegae on that day were probably related to each other in some way, whether by region, marriage or acquaintanceship of varying degrees and many of them probably had grievances against their king. Any or all of them may have had sufficient motive to participate in such a plot; but that alone does not condemn them. It is also unquestionably the case that more than one Macedonian monarch came to the throne by means of assassinating his predecessor, but that too is insufficient to return a verdict on Alexander.⁵³ I would like to think that there is no evidence to convict him, or his mother, here. Perhaps I am afflicted by similar biases to those of Diodorus and Plutarch but I freely admit that, as Wood writes, "although it has never been proved, [it] is not impossible" that the twenty year-old prince was involved in some capacity.⁵⁴ The truth will likely never be known; but that will hardly stop historians from arguing over this matter and continuing to condemn Olympias and to prosecute Alexander for the crime of parricide by proxy.

Onto Thebes, then. This episode is one of the most controversial in the Conqueror's career and would be a defining factor in his reception. In 335 BC, while Alexander was putting down a revolt among the Illyrians and other northern tribesmen who had taken the opportunity of Philip's demise to challenge Macedonian hegemony, Thebes revolted from the League of Corinth, spurred on by Demosthenes in Athens and the rumour that Alexander had perished, not unlike his uncle Perdiccas III in 359, fighting the northerners.⁵⁵ On hearing of this news, Alexander, very much alive, undertook a lightning march with his forces and arrived to besiege Thebes within a fortnight of their initial rebellion. The story is well known: Thebes refused to surrender; it was defeated; many of its male citizens of military age were put to death, the women and children sold into slavery and the city and its famous walls were razed to the ground apart

52 Fox, *Alexander*, 505; Heckel, *Who's Who*, 147.

53 See Carney, "Women in Alexander's Court", 235.

54 Michael Wood, *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great* (London: BBC Books, 1997), 32.

55 See Cartledge, *Alexander*, 81 ff.

from certain sacred sites along with the house of the poet Pindar. It may seem to us ironic that a similar doom had recently been inflicted upon the Thracian Getae on the far bank of the Danube, along with a number of other cities of the Thracians and Triballians, on Alexander's orders, according to Arrian by way of Ptolemy, and no one in Greece appears to have batted an eyelid at the misfortune of these 'barbarians'.⁵⁶ Indeed, we would be rather surprised if they had. But Greeks were another matter altogether. That Alexander would exact such a harsh penalty on the civilized sons of Hellas sent shockwaves throughout the land, echoing down the corridors of time. This both tarnished his reputation and, at once, reinforced his authority over the other League city-states pondering defection. Athens demurred further fomenting of dissent, at least overtly, and sought peaceful terms with Macedon and only Sparta and her allies, with Persian backing, would later undertake rebellion in 331, while Alexander was away campaigning in Asia.

The destruction of Thebes resulted in much controversy and this is to be found in both the Vulgate and Official traditions of the primary sources. Arrian's account almost certainly derives from the lost *History* of Ptolemy and it offers one of several occasions where we can be reasonably certain that this Successor probably 'fudged' the truth in order to slander a later opponent.⁵⁷ Arrian writes that, according to Ptolemy son of Lagus, Perdiccas began the assault on the city without orders, thus pre-empting whatever Alexander's plans might have been.⁵⁸ This is plainly contradicted by Diodorus who indicates that Alexander himself gave the order to attack.⁵⁹ Perdiccas would be Ptolemy's rival in the Wars of the Successors and so the future Pharaoh of Egypt seems to have undertaken some creative character assassination by means of revisionist history.⁶⁰ Perhaps too Ptolemy sought to exonerate his friend and king to an extent by deflecting some of the *onus* onto an impatient subordinate; but, it can do little to exculpate Alexander for the eventual consequences of that attack. Ptolemy usually has no qualms about describing the fate of rebels in gory detail and Thebes is no exception.

Arrian also states that Alexander gave the Thebans multiple opportunities to back down from their revolt in order to treat with him diplomatically,

56 Arrian *Anabasis* 1.3–7; see Young, *The Lost Book of Alexander*, 19–21.

57 Young, *The Lost Book of Alexander*, 24–26. See too Joseph Roisman, "Ptolemy and his Rivals in his History of Alexander the Great", *CQ* 34 (1984): 373–385 and R.M. Errington, "Bias in Ptolemy's History of Alexander", *CQ* 19 (1969): 233–242.

58 Arrian *Anabasis* 1.8.1–3.

59 Diodorus XVII.12.3.

60 See Waterfield, *Dividing the Spoils*, s.v. Perdiccas.

but that they stubbornly refused.⁶¹ This is corroborated by both Plutarch and Diodorus.⁶² The latter source includes a substantial description of their refusal, adding treasonous language and expressions of Persian sympathies to the crimes of the rebels, saying that they invited the host of Macedonians and their Boeotian allies “to join the Great King and Thebes in destroying the tyrant of Greece”.⁶³ Diodorus indicates that this enraged Alexander and may have influenced his eventual treatment of the conquered Thebans. Plutarch reports a similar statement of treason, imploring “all those who wished to liberate Greece” to rally to their side; although, he omits any reference to the Persians here as allies against Macedonian hegemony.⁶⁴ Perhaps Diodorus inserted the allusion to the Persians in order to explain or justify the king’s wrath against a city that proposed to side with the enemy, in keeping with his pro-Alexander bias, or perhaps some of the soldiers whom his source, Cleitarchus, interviewed in Alexandria recalled these statements being shouted from the walls by the city’s defenders. Ptolemy could not have been everywhere on the battlefield and others would have seen and heard things that he missed. Justin/Trogus discusses Alexander’s initial forbearance also stating, albeit in the rather simplified language of the *Epitome*, that the Thebans had “revolted from him to the Persians”.⁶⁵ It would be interesting to see what the missing books of Curtius Rufus would have added to this discussion because we have at least two sources from the Vulgate tradition that maintain Persian complicity. Cleitarchus again seems likely to have originated the historiography on this, but if there were any truth to it, why is it then absent from the Official tradition? It would have made for excellent propaganda.

Treasonous Thebans aside, Alexander’s allies certainly appear to have played a major role in the aftermath. Diodorus names these as Thespians, Plataeans, Orchomenians and “some others hostile to Thebes”; Justin gives Phocians, Plataeans and Orchomenians; however Plutarch and Arrian only mention Phocians and Plataeans.⁶⁶ Diodorus says that, after the Theban forces were routed, these Boeotian allies, much moreso than the Macedonians, ransacked the city for pillage and vehemently engaged in the general slaughter. They used the opportunity to give free rein to their vengeance, having built up many grievances from the time when they had been oppressed by the erstwhile The-

61 Arrian *Anabasis* 1.7–8.

62 Plutarch *Alexander* XI.7; Diodorus XVII.9.2–12.4.

63 Diodorus XVII.9.4–6.

64 Plutarch *Alexander* XI.4.1–4.

65 Justin *Epitome* XI.2.7–8.

66 Diodorus XVII.135; Justin XI.3.8; Plutarch *Alexander* XI.5; Arrian *Anabasis* 1.8.8.

ban Hegemony.⁶⁷ Plutarch, Arrian and Justin all agree with this interpretation. The crux of the matter, of course, is the decision of how to deal with the traitorous city-state once it was defeated. There is some notable contrast here in at least one primary source. After enumerating a range of past iniquities by Thebes, which included oppressing her subjects, aiding the Persians and voting to have Athens razed after its defeat by Sparta in 404, Arrian writes that:

The allied troops who had taken part in the fighting were entrusted by Alexander with the ultimate settlement of the fate of Thebes. They decided to garrison the Cadmeia, but to raze the city to the ground.⁶⁸

Diodorus gives a more detailed account but says essentially the same thing.⁶⁹ Justin also provides a fairly vivid (for him) narrative of the allies, listing their complaints against Thebes; of a Theban captive named Cleadas making a case for mercy, which was rejected; and of the Boeotian allies' final, wrathful decision to have the city destroyed, its territories parcelled out among them.⁷⁰ Plutarch breaks rank from these versions, saying that "the city was stormed, plundered and razed to the ground" as an example to "frighten the rest of the Greeks into submission", but also adding that Alexander was "redressing the wrongs done to his allies".⁷¹ Plutarch, who is normally quite pro-Alexander, here ascribes blame directly to him, citing the allies merely as a pretext, and this appears to have been more a view of his own rather than something explicitly stated in his sources. He also adds that Alexander felt "distressed" about Thebes in later years and that this made him "milder in the treatment of other peoples".⁷² Hammond has reasonably demonstrated that Diodorus, Plutarch and Justin/Trogus are all using Cleitarchus as their main source for this episode and, if so, then the differences would seem to be largely down to individual interpretations.⁷³

As is perhaps to be expected, modern historians have had a field day with the destruction of Thebes. Those who seek to vilify Alexander seize upon it as proof positive of his tyranny. Others seek to rationalize it, but even his apolo-

67 See Young, *The Lost Book of Alexander*, 25; Fox, *Alexander*, 86–89.

68 Arrian *Anabasis* I.9.9.

69 Diodorus XVII.14.1–4.

70 Justin XI.4.1.

71 Plutarch *Alexander* XI.5.1–5.

72 Plutarch *Alexander* XIII.2.3–4.

73 N.G.L. Hammond, *Sources for Alexander the Great: An Analysis of Plutarch's 'Life' and Arrian's 'Anabasis Alexandrou'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 24–27.

gists struggle with the doom visited upon the city of Cadmus. It is interesting, as mentioned above, that the similar fate of the Getae tends to get little mention by either camp and this seems to indicate a pro-Hellenic prejudice, perhaps even unconsciously, having been transmitted down through the dusty annals of history from the primary sources. Tarn states that, while the king left the decision to the League of Corinth, the only members present were enemies of Thebes and so “the responsibility lies with Alexander”.⁷⁴ He also considers the destruction of Thebes to have been one of the most “terrible crimes on his record”, alongside the murder of Parmenion and the treatment of Massaga; but he also cautions that only those who have known the “temptations of power can judge”.⁷⁵ He does place the responsibility entirely on Alexander, though, and clearly considers it to have been a tragic mistake. Fox, who advised Oliver Stone on the 2004 film, is perhaps one of the most objective and thorough of Alexander scholars in his research; even so, he seems inclined to favour a more positivist version of Alexander at times. Yet he also regards the decision to have been Alexander’s, discussing the same range of arguments mitigating Thebes’ destruction due to the Boeotians, concluding that the “allies would naturally have decreed their approval of an act which they were too frightened to condemn”.⁷⁶ Cartledge is more forthright, saying that “the order was given, formally on the decision of the Council of the League of Corinth but really at Alexander’s behest (we may safely infer)”.⁷⁷ He considers this to have been a case of *Realpolitik* and elaborates that “Alexander decided to cow into submission by an act of extreme political violence the allies whose anti-Persian crusade he was supposed to be leading”, revealing the true face of the twenty-one year-old king, indicating that he only gave lip-service to his much vaunted policy of Pan-Hellenism when it suited him.⁷⁸ This comes across as a kind of more extreme take on Plutarch’s interpretation, echoing the same sentiments however enlarged.

Plutarch and Arrian’s philosophical leanings might permit them to forgive Alexander when he regretted the fate of Thebes, but not Paul Cartledge; although, considering that he has mainly written on the Spartans, whose opinion of the Conqueror is well known, it is possible to hypothesize that their predisposition may have influenced his interpretation, which typically inclines more towards that of ‘Alexander the Tyrant’. And this view is by no means isolated,

74 Tarn, *Alexander*, 7.

75 Tarn, *Alexander*, 125.

76 Fox, *Alexander*, 88.

77 Cartledge, *Alexander*, 57.

78 Cartledge, *Alexander*, 82.

although it varies by degrees between scholars in terms of the extent of culpability ascribed. Worthington, for example, considers this one of the “darkest episodes” in the king’s career; even so, while placing the blame squarely on Alexander, who he says used the allies to deflect personal responsibility, he also points out that Thebes may have been harbouring Amyntas Perdicca, a rival for the Macedonian throne.⁷⁹ Treacherous disloyalty could expect such rewards and Philip II had visited a similar fate on Olynthus because they had given quarter to two of his step-brothers who had also laid claim to his crown. Andrew Young’s outstanding work reconstructing the lost book of Ptolemy argues that the latter sought to refocus blame onto the Boeotian allies. He ultimately sides with Plutarch’s view that Alexander knew exactly what would become of Thebes and fully endorsed it. Young points out that in all other conflicts north and east, “in every other account throughout the campaigns it was Alexander who made the decision on what to do with a given city after being taken”; the fate of Thebes being determined by the League of Corinth in whatever form, he argues, “stands out as possibly apocryphal”.⁸⁰ Young considers it unusual to portray Alexander as “barely in control of the situation”, passing the decision over to vengeful allies. Even if that were true, he argues, the king must have known what the outcome would be beyond any shadow of doubt.

Despite the dominance of this sort of interpretation, Mary Renault sees Thebes as an exception in a number of ways. She asserts that Alexander could have personally decided the fate of a captured city in Thrace, Illyria or Asia where his authority was absolute.⁸¹ Thebes was different. Apart from Chaeronea (338 BC), which predates the League of Corinth, this was the only occasion on which Alexander campaigned personally against League-member Greeks who were not mercenaries in the pay of the Persian king. This and the wars conducted by his regent Antipater in ca. 331 in response to the provocations of the Spartans, who were in collusion with Persia, were, as Ryder writes, “the first and only punitive actions carried out in defence of the Common Peace treaty by the general body of the signatories after decisions reached by a set procedure”.⁸² Thebes had manifestly reneged on its oath to the League by attacking the Macedonian garrison in the Cadmeia and was in open rebellion.⁸³

79 Worthington, *By the Spear*, 134–135. See too W. Heckel & L.A. Tritle (eds.), *Crossroads of History: The Age of Alexander the Great* (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 2003), 65–86.

80 Young, *The Lost Book of Alexander*, 25–26.

81 Renault, *The Nature of Alexander*, 79.

82 T.T.B. Ryder, “Macedonian Domination: the Peace of 338/337 and After” in Ian Worthington, *Alexander the Great: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 75.

83 See Anson, *Alexander*, 132–133 and below; see P.J. Rhodes and Robin Osborne, *Greek His-*

Failure to settle the matter with Thebes, and to settle it sharply, could have entailed severe repercussions for the unity of the League of Corinth, not to mention the problems it would have posed to Alexander's premiership.

The influence of the other League members present at Thebes should not be dismissed. Renault states:

... the Thebans were familiar enemies, against whom generations of hatred had been stored. Before Philip's intervention, the Phocian War had been marked with heinous savageries. The atrocities of the lately betrayed Plataeans, if anyone's fault but their own, may most fairly be blamed upon Demosthenes.⁸⁴

The latter, in his *de facto* capacity as leader of Athens, had urged Athenian involvement and reportedly supplied arms to the Phocians, Plataeans and others against Macedon.⁸⁵ These highly relevant past grievances aside, Alexander's relationship with the League of Corinth was different from that with other political players. It perhaps comes down to the issue of whether the League was only a sinecure or whether Alexander took this special relationship seriously—again, whether he was a tyrant or otherwise. The fact that he limited his actions to mainly dealing with insurrections rather than micro-managing their societies, as Cassander and other Successors would do, suggests something different from tyranny. Make no mistake here: the Common Peace of the League of Corinth favoured Macedon and its king; yet Alexander III appears to have respected the traditions and autonomy of individual Greek *poleis*—insofar as they behaved themselves within the strictures of the treaty. He was surely an autocrat in Asia, but a nominally constitutional monarch, albeit with extraordinary discretion, in Macedon and Greece.⁸⁶

Arrian says that Alexander arrived at Thebes, by his lightening march, with his “whole force”.⁸⁷ How large was this force and how many troops were there

toral Inscriptions, 404–323 BC (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 373 for a surviving example of the oath in the form of an inscription from Athens.

84 Ibid. Of note here is the fact that Callisthenes, our next major theme, wrote a pro-Macedonian account of the Phocian War, probably with a view to patronage under Philip; see. Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1923), II B 124, T 25 from Cicero's *Ad Familiares* v.12.2.

85 Worthington, *Alexander*, 34 details these conflicts; see Demosthenes *Oration* 57 and Plutarch *Life of Demosthenes* 12.

86 See Worthington, *Alexander*, 75–80.

87 Arrian I.7.6.

from the allies? Arrian does not give precise figures, apart from 2,000 Agrianes and archers, for whom Alexander had sent while fighting the northern tribes and which, along with the remainder of his forces from those struggles, were presumably present at Thebes.⁸⁸ Diodorus offers a figure of 30,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry, “all seasoned veterans”, which might be an exaggeration but it is difficult to say by how much.⁸⁹ We neither know how many of the allies were present nor how many defenders held Thebes, but a well-defended strong-point almost always has the initial advantage in siege warfare and Diodorus comments that the Thebans, though outnumbered, were “superior in bodily strength” due to their constant practicing in their *gymnasia*.⁹⁰ Plutarch and Diodorus both agree that 6,000 Theban soldiers died as a result of the battle.⁹¹ They disagree on the number sold into slavery, with Plutarch giving 20,000 and Diodorus 30,000, and it is unclear how many of these were non-combatants. Diodorus says that Alexander realized 440 talents of silver (about 11,440 kg) from their sale but this does not clarify the number or type of prisoners taken.⁹² Neither do we know how many Thebans escaped. Diodorus mentions a “a gift of weapons” and heavy armour to the Thebans from Demosthenes in Athens, but no reinforcements, along with some troops coming from the Peloponnesians who waited at the isthmus but did not join in the struggle; he also mentions that the Thebans were using their recently enfranchised slaves in defence.⁹³ Alexander’s forces, including the allies, surely outnumbered the Thebans, although the numbers may have been closer than often imagined and the defenders had some advantages that might have offset this, if only to some degree.

What does seem certain, despite the lack of clarity about exact numbers, is that the Greeks were divided in their support of Alexander, whether philosophically or in actuality. The Athenians and Spartans were anti-Alexander (and the latter were not League members) but chose to ‘wait and see’ the outcome of the battle before committing troops. It is reasonable to deduce that many other Greek *poleis* took a similar tack. The Boeotian allies were clearly supporting Alexander in his cause, albeit perhaps in no small part on account of their

88 Arrian I.6.10.

89 Diodorus XVII.9.3.1–4.

90 Diodorus XVII.11.4.7–9.

91 Plutarch *Alexander* 11.12; Diodorus XVII.14.1.1–4.

92 The same figure may be found in a fragment of Cleitarchus (Athenaeus IV.148d–f; Jacoby, *FGr.H.*, no. 137, F 1), but this applies to the total wealth of the city itself and the price of slaves at this time is far from certain.

93 Diodorus XVIII.8.5–6.

past relations with the Thebans. This was no academic debate, although it very much reflects the shape of such debates that would issue from these events. And the case could be made that by 'voting with their feet', so to speak, the Boeotian allies had earned the right to determine the fate of Thebes, in League Council alongside the Macedonians and their *hegemon*, whereas the others, if only by being conspicuously absent, had not. Thebes had broken her oath to the League, which had been made to "Philip or his heirs", to maintain the Common Peace; those who sent arms were also in violation for helping the rebels and those who did not send aid to Alexander "to make war against transgressors" who broke the oath could be seen as likewise in violation.⁹⁴ Granted, on the issue of aid, the oath specified that it should be rendered if requested, and we do not know who was requested to help or who was not, and that might, to a point, exonerate any who did not participate in punishing Thebes without having been asked.

So what if Alexander knew how the League members present would vote; does that make him personally responsible for the fate of Thebes? Anson agrees that it was a League decision but states that "it is clear that Alexander could have saved the city if he wished".⁹⁵ But could he? Had he not accepted their decision, then he might have been faced with an army of disaffected allies, with hostile Arcadians waiting just round the corner and a range of other *poleis* looking for an opportunity to pounce. One might expect, with Arrian's military background, that he would have made this same argument; although perhaps his source, Ptolemy, played down the prospect for propagandistic reasons, emphasizing the cowing of any aims at broader rebellion through Thebes' crushing defeat.⁹⁶ But Alexander might have easily found himself with battle-exhausted troops besieged in the very city that he had just conquered, its defences now spent, cut off from any timely resupply and facing a general revolt in Greece. The stakes were that high. I am not making this case to justify the razing of Thebes; I do so merely to illustrate how a complex solution obtained for an equally complex problem that was definitely not to everyone's satisfaction, but which addressed this unique situation in a comprehensible way. It was *Realpolitik*, however dismal the consequences. Had Athens or any other city-state truly wanted to save Thebes, then perhaps they should have been present to exert their influence in one capacity or another.

94 See Anson, *Alexander*, 132–133; Diodorus XVI.89; Justin IX.5.

95 Anson, *Alexander*, 124.

96 Arrian I.8–9.

The fall of Callisthenes of Olynthus is the third and final episode to be considered in depth in this chapter. It too is particularly fraught with historiographical issues and inconsistencies. Those notwithstanding, it also appears to have opened the floodgates of scholarship on a major academic debate concerning Alexander. Callisthenes was either Aristotle's nephew or grand-nephew. He was known for his antiquarian tendencies but was well-published on historical subjects and the natural sciences, in keeping with both Aristotle and Alexander's interests, prior to taking up his post with the latter as well as having made a name for himself through the patronage and prominent relationship with the former.⁹⁷ Callisthenes had been either a fellow student or more likely Aristotle's 'teaching assistant' at the Shrine of the Nymphs at Mieza (between 343 and 340 BC), where Alexander studied. He would have been well-acquainted with his future master, along with his closest Companions, from the time that Alexander was about thirteen. Callisthenes had been cultivating his connections with Macedon for years and must have been pleased to have been invited as official historian on the Asiatic expedition. He is reported to have stated rather pompously that he went along in order to make Alexander's reputation, not his own.⁹⁸ Since this anecdote comes from Arrian by way of Ptolemy, the aspersion against the historian's character is necessarily suspect, though not beyond belief. Tarn's position is that, in the propaganda wars that accompanied the Wars of the Successors, the Peripatetic School, patronized by Cassander, had sought revenge for Callisthenes' treatment through advancing an argument of Alexander the 'lucky tyrant', already present among the forensic speeches of the Attic orator Demosthenes.⁹⁹ This stood in marked contrast to the idealized position of Alexander the 'great civilizer', put forward by his proponents. Neither view should be dismissed and that is not my intention here; even so, "each is a judgement after the event on Alexander the Conqueror and ... each suffers from oversimplification".¹⁰⁰ As stated at the beginning, these positions—in one form or another, however transmuted throughout time—remain with us still, figuring prominently in virtually all subsequent receptions of Alexander. Such was perhaps the price for the punishment inflicted upon

97 See Truesdell S. Brown, "Callisthenes and Alexander", in *the American Journal of Philology* 70.3 (1949): 229, n. 19 and Heckel, *Who's Who*, 76–77.

98 Arrian IV.10.2.

99 See Elias Koulakiotis' chapter in this volume for his assessment of this argument in Demosthenes and for Aeschines' rebuttal along similar lines as with the much later incarnation of this debate found in Plutarch.

100 Brown, "Callisthenes and Alexander", 226.

a well-connected scholar, whatever his degree of culpability for the crime of which he was accused. And that crime, much as with Pausanias and the Thebans, was no less than treason.

It was exceedingly far-sighted of Alexander to bring along an historian to chronicle his activities on the march. Would that this work, however flatteringly written it is purported to have been, had survived intact to the current era. Be that as it may, Callisthenes left his indelible mark on the history and reception of these crucial times. Despite Alexander's considerable official activity, he would have likely cultivated a close *rapprochement* with his personal historian, probably scrutinizing his work before the instalments were relayed back to the homeland.¹⁰¹ It is difficult to say what sort of relationship the two men may have had outside Callisthenes' professional role, though we do have Plutarch's report that scholar and monarch engaged in sophisticated games of poetic "verse-topping", which seems amiable enough but may have also entailed some element of mutual animosity.¹⁰² It is noteworthy that Arrian reports that Callisthenes comforted Alexander after his drunken slaying of his friend and Companion, Cleitus the Black, which does suggest that at least at one time some "cordial relations existed between the two men".¹⁰³ It is difficult to determine Arrian's source on this and it may well have been Callisthenes himself, which would then necessarily be questionable. It is also possible to speculate that the Greek *literati* were regarded with some contempt in Alexander's camp, not by the king himself and his closest Companions whose interests were reputedly broad and liberal, but by many of his Macedonian associates. The surviving fragments of Ptolemy suggest little interest in Greek 'high culture' among most of their nobles and it is noteworthy that, at least in Curtius Rufus' account, the condemned traitor Philotas had to defend himself for favouring Greek cultural traditions over Macedonian ones.¹⁰⁴ This sort of attitude may have caused Callisthenes to feel like an unwelcome outsider from the beginning of the expedition and probably worsened with the passing of time.

The two occasions on which Callisthenes is reported to have refused *proskynesis* and, in the second instance was denied a kiss from the king, suggests friction at least between the two at that stage, if this is not revisionist propaganda. *Proskynesis* was a Persian custom appropriate to the King of Kings, who was not

101 Brown, "Callisthenes and Alexander", 234; see Felix Jacoby "Kallisthenes" in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft (R.-E.)*, Band X, 2, col. 1678, Stuttgart 1919, for the generally accepted position that Callisthenes' *History* was sent back in instalments.

102 Plutarch *Alexander*, 53–54.

103 Brown, "Callisthenes and Alexander", 240; Arrian IV.8–9.

104 Curtius Rufus *History* VI.10.23; see Brown, "Callisthenes and Alexander", 234.

regarded as a living god (rather, he was the god Ahura Mazda's 'vicar' on earth), but which was problematic for the Greeks inasmuch as such deference was the reserve of divinity alone. However, that too is contested.¹⁰⁵ Plutarch and Arrian both agree that Callisthenes acted tactlessly on numerous occasions, giving too loud a voice to his criticisms.¹⁰⁶ According to the former, Aristotle even weighed in with some advice by post, having been informed of his relation's liberality of speech, advising greater caution. During a verbal sparring match performed at the behest of the king, Plutarch indicates that the historian was asked to be critical of the Macedonians, whom he had just praised to much applause as part of the same sophistic display. Callisthenes, whose home city had been razed by Philip in 348, its population along with their Athenian allies being sold into slavery, "spoke long and boldly in his palinode ... pointing out that Philip's rise to power had occurred due to faction and division amongst the Greeks", and this did not go down well with the assembled company.¹⁰⁷ Arrian does not mention this conversation in his *Anabasis* but offers some further details about the historian's arrogance and criticisms, including a negative attitude towards Alexander's growing Orientalism. He also reports anecdotally of a conversation between Philotas, himself eventually implicated for complicity in a murder plot against the king, and Callisthenes in which the latter praised the Athenian tyrant slayers, Harmodius and Aristogeiton, and strongly implied that such a one in their own day would surely be given sanctuary in any Greek community that he liked, and moreover "that he would be safe in Athens".¹⁰⁸ This must come from Ptolemy's *History* and has the scent of revisionism about it, setting up both Philotas and Callisthenes for their future betrayals. The account of the palinode in Plutarch is considered by Jacoby to derive from Hermippus and Stroebeus.¹⁰⁹ We know next to nothing about Stroebeus but Hermippus, late 3rd century BC, was directly influenced by the Peripatetic school and, as Tarn has demonstrated, was hostile to Alexander.¹¹⁰

105 Ernst Badian, "Alexander the Great Between Two Thrones and Heaven: Variations on an Old Theme" in *Subject and Ruler: the Cult of the Ruling Power in Classical Antiquity*, ed. A. Small (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 22 argues that neither Persians nor Greeks saw it as an act of worship.

106 Plutarch *Alexander* 53–56; Arrian IV.10–15.

107 Plutarch *Alexander* 53.4. He also quoted a proverb in hexameter verse, sometimes attributed to Callimachus. Cf. the *Nicias* x1.3; *Morals* 479a.

108 Arrian IV.10.6.

109 Jacoby "Kallisthenes", *R.-E.*, 1919, X, 2, col. 1681.

110 W.W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilisation*, 2nd edition (London: Edward & Arnold Co., 1930), 255–256; Duane Reed Stuart, *Epochs of Greek and Roman Biography*, Sather Classical Lectures

According to Arrian and Plutarch, on one occasion (likely in Marakanda/Samarkand, in 327) Alexander passed round a “loving cup” (a *phialē*, associated with religious libations) and those who had agreed to prostration took a sip, bowed and then received a kiss from the king.¹¹¹ Plutarch interestingly adds another version that states that they bowed before an altar (*estia*) rather than to the king himself. Callisthenes took a sip from the cup but, while Alexander was distracted in talking with Hephaestion, did not bow but approached the king to receive his kiss. His omission was reported by one of the Companions (Demetrius, son of Pythonax, in both versions) and Alexander refused to kiss him. It seems somewhat hypocritical of Callisthenes that he declined *proskynesis* given that surviving fragments of his work indicate that he had already been preparing the Greeks for Alexander’s deification, which to them would justify prostration.¹¹² It does suggest that Callisthenes perhaps resented having to produce his overly flattering, non-academic ‘vanity piece’ for Alexander, if it was that.

Whether, as Brown argues, Callisthenes’ end was inevitable from this point and “Alexander controlled himself and awaited a more favourable opportunity” to remove him, after the historian had finished his *opus*, remains uncertain.¹¹³ Cartledge agrees with Brown here, saying that his “recalcitrance had been noted, and it seems that Alexander was just waiting for a suitable opportunity to do away with him”.¹¹⁴ “Callisthenes sealed his fate”, Freeman chimes in chorus, adding that Alexander only had to wait for the right time to silence him forever.¹¹⁵ How can they know this? Callisthenes had apparently “managed to prevent Alexander from permanently introducing the ritual of *proskynesis* among his Macedonian followers”.¹¹⁶ Following the historian’s objections, and the Macedonians’ favourable response to them, we are told that the policy of *proskynesis* was abandoned as untenable among the Greeks, though permitted for the Persians.¹¹⁷ Perhaps Alexander held a grudge for this check on his authority, but it was the traditional privilege of the Macedonians to have the

4 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1928), 177, also notes that Hermippus was not above citing fictitious authorities.

111 Brown, “Callisthenes and Alexander”, 243 ff. thinks that this was what ultimately served to condemn Callisthenes.

112 See Jacoby *FGr.H.*, II B, 124, F 14a, b.

113 Brown, “Callisthenes and Alexander”, 245.

114 Cartledge, *Alexander*, 73.

115 Freeman, *Alexander*, 264–265.

116 Freeman, *Alexander*, 265.

117 Arrian IV.10.3–12.1; Plutarch *Alexander* 54.4–6; see Anson, *Alexander*, 112–111.

king take their complaints seriously, and his wrath, if any, would not have been limited to Callisthenes alone.¹¹⁸ There is no definitive proof that he meditated murder at this stage. None of the primary sources explicitly tell us what Alexander was thinking. Like so much of the historiography around these events, the gaps have been filled with inference and innuendo.

The account of the refused kiss is strikingly similar in both Arrian and Plutarch. Hammond asserts that both took what elements they wanted of this episode from Chares of Mytilene.¹¹⁹ The latter was a Greek who had been appointed court-marshal or “introducer of strangers” to the king, an office borrowed from the Persian court. He wrote a *History* of Alexander in ten books, containing many personal details, the fragments of which are mostly preserved in Athenaeus of Naucratis’ antiquarian *Deipnosophistae* (end of A.D. 2nd/beginning of A.D. 3rd century). Chares’ *History* was concerned in the main with court ceremonies and personal gossip, including Alexander’s abortive attempt at introducing the Persian custom of *proskynesis*.¹²⁰ If Arrian had been unambiguously following Ptolemy or Aristobolus in reporting these events, then we might have cause to suspect their authenticity. The fact that both he and Plutarch recount the same tale from Chares perhaps suggests some likelihood that Callisthenes’ refusal of prostration occurred in reality—that is unless Chares also wholly or partially fabricated it.

There is some reason to believe that Callisthenes was critical of his monarch both in public and in private. His alleged involvement in the Conspiracy of the Pages, resulting in his demise, is in connection with this. Arrian and Plutarch describe the disaffection of the Royal Pages, led by one Hermolaus, son of Sopolis, who was interested in philosophy and, in consequence, is said to have had some kind of close relationship with Callisthenes.¹²¹ Hermolaus was humiliatingly flogged after slaying a charging boar during a hunt in Bactria in 327, whose killing was to have been reserved for Alexander. Hunting was considered an important part of the ‘liberal education’ afforded the Royal Pages in exchange for service to their king, and so too were courtly manners.

118 See W.L. Adams, “Macedonian Kingship and the Right of Petition”, in *Ancient Macedonia IV. Papers read at the Fourth International Symposium held in Thessaloniki, September 21–25, 1983* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1986), 32–52 on the ancient Macedonians’ special relationship with their monarch.

119 Hammond, *Sources for Alexander*, 96–97.

120 N.G.L. Hammond & H.H. Scullard, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 227.

121 Arrian IV. 13–14; Plutarch *Alexander* 55.

Hermolaus had overstepped the bounds and was accordingly punished.¹²² Also despairing of their king's orientaling tendencies, we are told that the youths, led by an outraged Hermolaus, decided to murder Alexander but the plot was foiled through either an accident or divine intervention, depending on what one chooses to believe, and somehow Callisthenes was implicated.

This is where the accounts differ, with the Official and Vulgate traditions unsurprisingly disagreeing on the issue of testimony against the historian. Arrian tells us that both Aristobolus and Ptolemy declare "that the boys said that Callisthenes urged them to commit the crime".¹²³ He adds, however, that "most sources" do not mention this. Plutarch, by contrast, writes that "even under the ordeal of torture, not one of Hermolaus' accomplices denounced Callisthenes" and that Alexander wrote in a letter to his generals Craterus, Attalus and Alectas stating that the boys claimed the conspiracy was none other than their own doing.¹²⁴ Curtius Rufus, following Cleitarchus, gives a much fuller if sensationally elaborated account. Rufus states categorically that "Callisthenes was certainly not named as one involved in the plot", although he says that the historian did have regular communications with Hermolaus, counselled him after the flogging incident to remember that he was a man (whether merely as a comfort or as a call to arms is unclear), imputing that Callisthenes probably, through heavy implication, vented some of his criticisms of tyranny *vis-à-vis* Alexander in the presence of the impressionable youth and his peers.¹²⁵ Rufus does not give his source here; indeed, he rarely ever mentions his sources at all and in the instance of Callisthenes' reputed counsel it is "some say", but he is probably following Cleitarchus.¹²⁶ Justin's *Epitome* of Trogus connects the historian's fate to his refusal of *proskynesis*, simply saying that "his opposition proved fatal, both to himself and to other eminent Macedonians, who were all put to death on the pretence that they were engaged in a conspiracy".¹²⁷ This is surely an interpretation, although given the consistency among Vul-

122 See Ada Cohen, *Art in the Era of Alexander the Great: Paradigms of Manhood and Their Cultural Dimensions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 131.

123 Arrian IV.14.3.1–2.

124 Plutarch *Alexander* 55.3.1–3.

125 Curtius Rufus *History* VIII.6–7.

126 See Quintus Curtius Rufus, *The History of Alexander*, translated by John Yardley, with an introduction and notes by Waldemar Heckel (London: Penguin Books, 2001), Heckel's introduction, 6ff. Rufus only mentions Cleitarchus twice (IX.5.21 and IX.8.15); he refers to Ptolemy and one Timagenes of Alexandria (both at IX.5.21); little is known about the latter except that he came to Rome from Alexandria in about 55 BC

127 Justin XII.7.1–3.

gate sources, it may ultimately derive from Cleitarchus and thence the soldiers' perception of events. The story is missing in *lacunae* from Diodorus, although alluded to in his introduction to Book XVII, and we may, rightly or otherwise, assume it to have been similar to Rufus' elaborated version, based on their common source.

The actual death of Callisthenes is a subject of even more debate. Aristobolus, according to Arrian, wrote that the historian was dragged in chains wherever the army went and eventually died when his health gave way. Ptolemy, by contrast, reported that he was tortured and hanged, which may be in keeping with the Peripatetics' preferred version of events aimed at condemning Alexander.¹²⁸ One can readily imagine Arrian wringing his hands in frustration at these contradictory versions when he declares "so we see that even the most trustworthy of writers, men who were in fact with Alexander at the time, have related conflicting accounts of infamous events with which they must have been perfectly familiar".¹²⁹ He also mentions that there are many other conflicting reports of his death. Rufus says that Callisthenes died under torture, editorializing that "he was innocent of any plot to kill the king, but the sycophantic quality of courtly life did not suit his nature".¹³⁰ Plutarch says that "some accounts" indicate he was hanged, others that he was "clamped in irons and died of an illness". Although, he also gives Chares of Mytilene's version which states that Callisthenes was imprisoned for seven months "in order that he be tried by the Council of the League of Corinth, in the presence of Aristotle" but that he died in prison "of extreme corpulence and the disease of lice".¹³¹

There is substantial indication among the primary sources that Callisthenes had been critical of Alexander and that he indirectly encouraged the conspiracy against the king. Unlike his kinsman Aristotle, whose tuition of Alexander had been paid through the reconstitution of his home *polis* of Stageira,

128 On Ptolemy's connections with the Peripatetics at Alexandria, see Demetr. FF 2; 38; 40; 59 Stork-Ophuijsen-Dorandi; On Demetrius see Fritz Wehrli, "Der Peripatos bis zum Beginn der römischen Kaiserzeit," in *Die Philosophie der Antike*. Band III, *Ältere Akademie. Aristoteles-Peripatos*, Hrsg. Hellmut Flashar (Basel-Stuttgart: Schwabe & Co AG—Verlag, 1983), 559–566. And see Squillace's chapter later in this volume.

129 Arrian IV.14. See Cartledge 2005, 263 ff. and Fox, *Alexander*, 323 ff. for their attempts to disambiguate the death of Callisthenes.

130 Curtius Rufus VIII.8.21.

131 Plutarch *Alexander* 55.7; see Worthington, *Alexander the Great: A Reader*, 274–275; Renault, *The Nature of Alexander*, 160–161, ignores Plutarch here and believes that Alexander had the historian executed, "making no distinction between the theorist killer and the man with the knife".

which itself had also been destroyed by Philip in 348, Callisthenes had no such redress for his annihilated fatherland. Perhaps he still felt bitter. Complaints of him being overly critical of his king were made by his detractors.¹³² Rufus comments that “it was agreed that Callisthenes would lend a ready ear to the Pages’ criticisms and accusations” and Arrian says that his accusers were eagerly believed when they declared his part in the plan, with some saying that “he himself urged them on in their plotting”. Plutarch writes that Lysimachus and Hagnon, both high-ranking Macedonian nobles, asserted that the historian had been vocally airing his views against despotism to all of the pages who adored him, treating him as if he were the only “free man” among them.¹³³ It is unclear which source these three authors are using here but they appear to have obtained the allegations from a single writer, given their consistency. Plutarch also cites a letter, written at a later date, from Alexander to Antipater, his regent in Macedon, indicating that the Pages were executed by the Macedonians, but saying “I will punish the sophist and those who sent him ... along with those who shelter my enemies in the city-states”.¹³⁴ Both Brown and Hammond consider this letter to be genuine; Hamilton argues, though, that it refers to “new evidence” which came to light incriminating Callisthenes.¹³⁵

But is the letter genuine? Or, if so, could it have been referring to a different “sophist”? Plutarch clearly believes that it related to Callisthenes; but there is room for doubt. In terms of his fate, Hammond argues that Chares’ version of imprisonment with a view to a trial “is probably to be believed, because he was a Greek at court and his account was circumstantial”; he adds that the captivity of Callisthenes was “developed by later writers into a tale of horror”, adding that to be lousy is not in itself debilitating.¹³⁶ The conditions of his detention might not have been necessarily harsh since we are told that Alexander of Lyncestis, Antipater’s son-in-law who was thrice implicated in another plot against the king, was arrested in 334/3 and held prisoner for several years prior to his execution in 327.¹³⁷ And he did not die in prison under similar circumstances. Sifting through these diverse and greatly distorted versions, it looks like Cal-

132 See Hammond, *Sources for Alexander the Great*, 98–99.

133 Rufus VIII.6.24 ff.; Arrian IV.12.7; Plutarch *Alexander* 55.2.

134 Plutarch op. cit. 55.

135 J.R. Hamilton, “The Letters in Plutarch’s *Alexander*”, in *Proceedings of the African Classical Association* 4 (1961): 16.

136 Hammond, *Sources for Alexander the Great*, 98–100, esp. n. 23.

137 See Krzysztof Nawotka, *Alexander the Great* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 144–145; Curtius Rufus VII.1.6–7, VIII.8.6; Diodorus XVII.32.2 reports him bound and imprisoned awaiting trial in comparable terms as Callisthenes.

listhenes was perhaps too free in giving his opinions about Alexander, if not actually guilty of direct treason, though that remains unproven and perhaps unprovable. His vocal declamations may have encouraged the Pages in their attempt. At least one of the contributors in this *Companion*, Giuseppe Squillace, takes the position that Callisthenes was, in fact, executed and that the contrasting versions in the sources came about due to a dissonance between the reality and the official version propagated by Alexander himself. He makes a compelling case, considering especially the role of Ptolemy in upholding the Peripatetic position due to his close ties with both Demetrius of Phaleron and that school. But my own impression is that Callisthenes was probably not executed and that he likely died in prison of an unknown illness while awaiting trial. Given the doubt as to his direct involvement, along with his familial and scholarly associations, a trial by a League tribunal in Greece would seem the most prudent, not to mention strategic, approach.

However Callisthenes actually met his end, it appears to have resulted in an academic bombshell that set the tone for virtually all future debates about Alexander. Indeed, had Alexander known the consequences, he might have redoubled his efforts to preserve the disgraced historian as “the men of the Academy and the Lyceum now sank their rivalries to execrate in concert the martyrdom of free-minded philosophy”, or so says Mary Renault, echoing Tarn.¹³⁸ The immediate impact on the Peripatetic School is clearly indicated in this fragment quoted by Cicero:

Mourning the death of his friend, Theophrastus ... says that Callisthenes fell in with a very powerful and fortunate man, but one who did not understand how to use his good fortune.¹³⁹

This criticism perhaps seems mild, *prima facie*, but this purported deficit on Alexander's part here, an apparent lack of self-control, could be seen as particularly scornful by the philosophically inclined. Tarn's argument is that the position developed to the effect that Alexander had certainly been very lucky, thus accounting for his successes, but that he was also a ruthless tyrant (according to Plato's definition: ruled by his appetites).¹⁴⁰ This must have appealed to Cassander, who was intimately involved with both Athens and the Peripatetics

¹³⁸ Renault, *The Nature of Alexander*, 161.

¹³⁹ Cicero *Tusculum Disputationes* 111.21; see Jacoby, *FGr.H.*, II B, 124, T 19b; and see Brown, “Callisthenes and Alexander”, 225, n. 1.

¹⁴⁰ E.g. Plato *Republic* IX, & *passim*.

who then, under his auspices, may have accordingly produced fitting scholarly invective in defence of their maligned colleague.¹⁴¹

Stoneman plays down Tarn's argument of the anti-Alexander rhetoric of the Peripatetics as potentially a "kind of category mistake", contending that Alexander, due to his considerable impact on the popular imagination, provided a general subject for philosophical *exempla* on virtue and vice which would be carried on well into the Renaissance. He does at least admit that the death of Callisthenes "at the hands of a king is an event likely to impress other philosophers".¹⁴² Indeed, Mensching also disputed Tarn on the grounds of the limited, hard evidence of any Peripatetic backlash.¹⁴³ The evidence is indeed limited, although the circumstances are compelling. We have Pausanias' report that Cassander, who had not participated in the Asian expedition apart from having been sent by his father Antipater as part of a deputation to Babylon in 323, close to the time of Alexander's death, and who had been passed over as prospective regent by his own father, greatly disliked Alexander.¹⁴⁴ Diodorus also indicates that Olympias believed Cassander to have been complicit in Alexander's death and that this in no small part was a major source of conflict between them.¹⁴⁵ What is more, in 317 BC, the oft-restored Athenian democracy fell, arguably for the final time before the modern era, and Cassander in his then capacity as King of Macedon and *hegemon* of the League of Corinth, which he had seized by force of arms and duplicity, took a step that Alexander does not seem to have contemplated, even though he had ample opportunity as well as cause. Cassander set up a puppet regime of oligarchs and appointed one Demetrius of Phaleron as their leader. Demetrius was an Aristotelian and the immediate student of Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor, whose views probably harmonized with Cassander's anti-Alexander position.¹⁴⁶ The Lyceum prospered under the

141 See W.W. Tarn, "Alexander's Plans", in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 59.1 (January 1939): 124–135 in response to M.H. Fisch, "Alexander and the Stoics" in the *American Journal of Philology* 58:59–82 (1937): 129–144.

142 Richard Stoneman, "The Legacy of Alexander in Ancient Philosophy" in *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great*, ed. Joseph Roisman (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 328–329.

143 Eckart Mensching, "Peripatetiker über Alexander" in *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* (July 1963): 274–282.

144 Pausanias IX.7.2; see Elizabeth Carney, *Olympias: Mother of Alexander the Great* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 71–72.

145 Diodorus XVIII.57.2.

146 See Waterfield, *Dividing the Spoils*, 84–85. Theophrastus was probably working on his *Characters* during this period, which touched, albeit light-heartedly, on political issues relevant to Cassander's regime.

patronage of the new regime. It also turned out to be fortunate for them, if Tarn is correct, that a negative agenda regarding Alexander was compatible with that of the ruling elites at the time.

The debate over 'Alexander the Tyrant' arguably began with Demosthenes' *Philippics*, if not before, but Callisthenes' demise perhaps fuelled its 'exit velocity', so much so that it is still going strong and has been ever since its inception. Others seem to have felt compelled to respond to this position and repudiate it. Tarn saw this as being deftly illustrated nearly four centuries later in Plutarch's two epideictic speeches usually referred to as *On the Fortune and Virtue of Alexander*, in which he strives to refute the 'lucky tyrant' position, in response to Greek literary and philosophical traditions that were well established by that point, through arguing that Alexander was a "philosopher in practice" in the truest sense and not always so "fortunate" as many might imagine.¹⁴⁷ One key passage discusses the Stoic cosmopolitanism of Zeno of Citium (ca. 334–ca. 262 BC) and attributes the idea originally to Alexander, saying that the latter "ordered them to think of the whole inhabited world as their fatherland ... all good men as their kinsmen".¹⁴⁸ This interpretation is in no small part the basis of Tarn's positivist view of 'Alexander the Great Civilizer' and so too had informed George Grote's 'Unity of Mankind' thesis, although Schofield argues that it is in fact a "misreading" of the original Stoic doctrines.¹⁴⁹ Tarn and Wardman saw these speeches as Plutarch making "a serious defence against attacks by Stoic philosophers" aimed at Alexander; Hamilton opposes this, in part on grounds of contrast with the *Life of Alexander*, and Stoneman, essentially agreeing on the spirit of that position, takes a more circumspect approach.¹⁵⁰ Brown, while acknowledging that Tarn's argument is based heavily on these two speeches of Plutarch, is mildly critical of Hamilton who he notes is self-

147 Onesicritus, a Cynic philosopher and author of an overly flattering history of Alexander, appears to have been the first to formulate this image of him as a "philosopher in practice" shortly after the king's death; see Strabo 15, 1, 65 [*FGrHist* 134 F 17a] along with Koulakiotis' chapter in this volume. See too Sulochana R. Asirvatham, "Classicism and *Romanitas* in Plutarch's 'De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute'", in the *American Journal of Philology*, 126.1 (Spring 2005): 108–109.

148 Plutarch *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute* 329a–d.

149 W.W. Tarn *Alexander the Great*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), vol. 2, 399–499; Malcolm Schofield, *The Stoic Ideal of the City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1991, 104–111.

150 Stoneman, "The Legacy of Alexander", 341; Tarn, "Alexander's Plans", 124–135; Alan Wardman, "Plutarch and Alexander" in *Classical Quarterly* 5.1–2 (May 1955): 96–107; J.R. Hamilton, *Plutarch, Alexander, a Commentary* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), xxiii–xxxiii.

consciously reiterating Badian's views to the effect that that *On the Fortune and Virtue of Alexander* is merely "epideictic display" with no deeper purpose.¹⁵¹

In addition to being clearly influenced by a Platonic approach to virtue, Plutarch's work also fuses Roman ideas (*Humanitas* in particular) with Greek ones, forming a new reception of Alexander, although clearly derived from the original arguments, which is not surprising.¹⁵² In a conversation with Sulochana Asrivatham, a fellow contributor to this volume, she related to me the view that these speeches of Plutarch likely represent one of his first attempts at academic writing (and Brown agrees on this point),¹⁵³ as evidenced in no small part by the *naïveté* of some of his arguments in comparison to the relative sophistication of his later works. This seems fitting. In my own 'Images of Alexander' class, I set this same issue before my students and it is remarkable how, clearly influenced by these same modern receptions, they also tend to fall into one of the two principal camps about the Conqueror, repeating and recycling essentially the identical positions that have been bandied about and hotly contested since they sprang forth, like the evils of Pandora's box, in the immediate aftermath of his demise. Much as with a Socratic dialogue, we can only achieve *aporia* here with recourse to these scholarly arguments, however well-constructed. It seems reductive but one only has to pick a side and the necessary scholarship will 'flow' towards sustaining it. None of this clarifies the fate of Callisthenes or Alexander's intentions. Their discernible impact on the scholarship, whatever Tarn and his proponents may argue, remains contentiously indeterminate, if albeit decidedly suggestive.

There are many, many more episodes that we could consider in examining the receptions of 'Alexander the Great Civilizer' versus 'Alexander the Lucky Tyrant'. These might include, but are by no means limited to, the sieges of Tyre and Gaza, the burning of the royal palace at Persepolis, the trial and execution of Philotas, the assassination of Parmenion, the slaughter of the Indian mercenaries, the Exiles' Decree and the so-called 'Reign of Terror' in ca. 321–323. Each is fraught with historiographical controversy, presented by different versions in the sources and contrasting interpretations and receptions in the subsequent scholarship. Each one might serve to prove Alexander a tyrant or otherwise. Indeed, the episodes discussed in this chapter could have been dealt with in considerably more detail than I have had space to attend to here. But my aim

151 Triesdell S. Brown, Review of J.R. Hamilton's *Plutarch, Alexander, a Commentary in the American Journal of Philology* 92.2 (April 1971): 352 ff.

152 Asrivatham, "Classicism and *Romanitas*", *passim*.

153 Brown, Review of J.R. Hamilton's *Plutarch, Alexander*, 352.

was to use the examples of Philip's assassination, the fate of Thebes, and of Callisthenes in order to both illustrate the shape of the central debates concerning Alexander, along with some of their root causes and ramifications, as well as to offer my own reception, which is also an interpretation, of these events. In so doing I am well aware that I too have engaged in acts of insinuation and implication at least as much as those sources of whom I have availed myself, while at the same time calling them to account when it seemed to me that they had erred through one form of prejudice or another. Doubtless others will requite my own errors in due course.

As I have sought to demonstrate, scholars have been vehemently contesting the truth about Alexander since even before his untimely death. Virtually all have done so under the sway of one type of agenda or another, as they continue to do. Taking all of that into account, what follows is the 'frame', if you will, of the debate: we have no fully extant sources from primary witnesses, nor from Alexander himself, except in very limited, fragmentary and/or epistolary form, all of which are contested by modern scholarship to one degree or another, with those that are accepted subject to many preconditions and contrasting interpretations. We do have the Greek-born, Roman general and governor Arrian of Nicomedia's selected, summarised and paraphrased elements drawn largely from Alexander's Companions, the Pharaoh and historian Ptolemy I Soter, son of Lagus, Aristobolus the engineer, Admiral Nearchus and sometimes Chares of Mytilene, "introducer of foreigners", along with a handful of others, most of whom were eyewitnesses but all of whom had various agendas of their own which often play out in their works. And much of that too is contested. We also have the Roman Quintus Curtius Rufus, probably writing in the reign of Claudius and influenced in his attitudes towards tyranny by Caligula, the Romanized Celt Trogus (by way of another, later Roman, Justin) and the Sicilian-Greek Diodorus reporting on their receptions of mainly the Alexandrian scholar Cleitarchus, Chares again, the navigator *cum* 'admiral' Onisicritus, the Peripatetic Callisthenes and a few others, some of whom were eyewitnesses but most of whom were not. Cleitarchus accessed some eyewitness accounts from Alexander's veterans, but all of the Vulgate sources, again, had contested agendas and were subject to prejudices. It further complicates matters that both traditions share Callisthenes, to varying extents, as a primary source. And we have the Platonist Plutarch reinterpreting all of the above primary sources, plus some more, through his philosophical lens and through the influence of *Romanitas*. We have the reported political propaganda of Cassander of Macedon along with scholarly positions, invectives, and their refutations, by Athenian and other intellectual elites. Virtually all of this derives from a positive or negative stance towards Alexander. They started the debate

and we have it today through the receptions of Grote, Tarn, Badian, Renault, Cartledge, Fox, etc., too many to name here, each influenced by events of their eras, each aligning with one side or another to varying degrees according to their dispositions and, to be sure, their scholarly acumen.

When St. John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople (A.D. 347–407), asked his flock, “Tell me, where is the tomb (*sema*) of Alexander? Show it to me and tell me the day on which he died”, his purpose was to underscore the futility of a world in which even the greatest of individuals could be lost to history.¹⁵⁴ He was probably certain that no one at that time would be able to answer his question. To ask “Can we know the real Alexander?” is surely begging to be met with a similar response. That is not to say that archaeologists will not one day locate his tomb, or that scholars may not at some time discover the ‘truth’ about the Macedonian World Conqueror. For the moment, though, we are quite literally framed by the debate, caught up in its receptions and receptions of receptions, which are no less interesting than the truth and which go on to form their own kind of truth about those who make them and those who subscribe to them. Perhaps the real Greatness of Alexander resides in the fact that, through his earth-shatteringly monumental life and contentiously influential acts which divide us still in terms of their significance, he has held up a *speculum* in which we may, if nothing else, at least discover ourselves. And that is truly Great.

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154 *Homily XXIV* on the 2nd *Epistle* of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians.

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Attic Orators on Alexander the Great

Elias Koulakiotis

Hegemony and Rhetoric

After the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC the Athenians honoured the Macedonian king Philip and his son Alexander with an honorary decree and with the awarding of Athenian citizenship.¹ The reason was royal clemency towards the defeated city, combined with a respect of its democratic regime. This distinction itself would be nothing special were it not coupled with another symbolic gesture, namely the dedication of statues of the king and the young prince. They seem to have been erected on the Acropolis or in the Agora.²

Kings were omnipresent in the Greek world (e.g. in Sparta), even during the time of democracy and it was only after the Persian Wars, that the Great King of Persia stood for the negative side of the monarchic ideal.³ The Persian interventions in the Greek world during the fifth and fourth centuries BC did not prevent the major Greek cities from aspiring to a hegemonic position in Greece, which in Athens was linked to its regime.

1 See Arr. *Anab.* 1, 1, 3; Justin, IX, 4, 5; Plut. *Demosth.* 22, 4; *Schol. Ael. Arist. Panath.* 178, 16 (Dindorf): θῆεν ἡ πόλις ἐδέξατο, καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, Ἀλέξανδρον, εἰς πολίτας ἀνέγραψεν. See also A.B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander* I (Oxford: 1980), 51. Hephaistion was also awarded the Athenian citizenship: W. Heckel, "Hephaistion 'The Athenian'", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 87 (1991), 39–41.

2 For the statue see Acropolis Museum 1331 and the testimony by Paus. 1, 9, 4. This statue seems to present the Macedonian prince in a role-portrait as Attic ephebe: see A. Stewart, *Faces of Power. The Image of Alexander and the Hellenistic Politics* (Berkeley: 1993), 111–112; R. Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits* (Oxford: 1989), 16; I. Kralli, "Athens and the Hellenistic Kings (338–261 BC): The Language of the Decrees", *Classical Quarterly* 50 (2000), 114–117; D. Pantermalis, et al., *Μουσείο Ακρόπολης. Οδηγός* (Athens: 2015), 286–288.

3 P. Carlier, *La royauté en Grèce avant Alexandre* (Paris: 1984); A. Demandt, *Antike Staatsformen* (Berlin: 1995), 137–162; W. Eder, "Monarchie und Demokratie im 4. Jh. v. Chr. Die Rolle des Fürstenspiegels in der athenischen Demokratie", in *Die athenische Demokratie im 4. Jh. v. Chr.*, ed. W. Eder (Stuttgart: 1995), 153–173.

This changed with the kings of Macedon in the second half of the 4th c. BC.⁴ Now, the strong man in Pella was the undisputable *hegemon*, and for a great number of Athenian politicians this was hard to accept.⁵ Such a situation could only lead to a crisis, which is reflected on the political oratory of the period. The discussions on the democratic regime, very often referred to as “the ancestral government” (*politeia patrios*), represent existential anxieties of the Athenians before a changing world.

Still, the ruling circles of Athens were not unanimous on that. There were always voices of politicians and intellectuals who called for a reassessment of the monarchical ideal and signalled a willingness to compromise. The initiative for the above decree in honour of Philip and Alexander and the awarding of the Athenian citizenship should be considered as a result of these circles’ actions.

Alexander was aware of the significance of such symbolic acts. He was himself very sensitive to the power of gestures and images, as well as to ideological propaganda. In this scope he presented his expedition as a Panhellenic movement for gaining revenge against the Persian cruelties and interventions, and himself as the opposite of the “barbarian” king.

The protagonists of this period, be they for or against Alexander, used their speeches as part of a broader political discourse. In order to convince their audiences they employed arguments like ideas, notions and symbols, but rhetorical schemes as well in their performances. In a period when free speech was not entirely tolerated, many orators preferred to use ambiguity, parody and irony, in order to criticize the behaviour of the new strong men. One should also consider that today we work with not the oral presentation but the final written version of the speeches and that there was often a distance between performance and publication. In any case, the evidence by the Attic orators is an almost contemporary historical source, and very often a direct one, not usually referred to by later authors. It preserves a character of snapshots on Alexander’s life and as such the freshness of the eyewitness.⁶

4 See B. Virgilio, *Il re e la regalità ellenistica* (Pisa: 1999), 29–43; J. Ma, “Kings”, in *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*, ed. A. Erskine (London: 2003), 177–195.

5 G. Wirth, “Die unheimliche Großmacht. Zum Versuch der Griechen, aus einer Katastrophe das Beste zu machen”, in *Alexander der Große*, ed. W. Will (Bonn: 1998), 59–76.

6 See L. Gunderson, “Alexander and the Attic Orators”, in *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honor of Charles F. Edson*, ed. H. Dell (Thessaloniki: 1981), 183–191; E. Koulakiotis, *Genese und Metamorphosen des Alexandermythos im Spiegel der griechischen nicht-historiographischen Überlieferung bis zum 3. Jh. n. Chr.* (Konstanz: 2006), 23–58. On orations as historical source see L. Canfora, “Discours écrit, discours réel chez Démosthène”, in *Les savoirs de l’écriture*, ed. M. Detienne (Paris: 1988), 214–215; S. Todd, “The Use and Abuse of the Attic Orators”, *Greece*

Inventing a Tyrant and a King

Although the baseline of Athenian politics after 335 BC is assessed as pacifist, there were still votes against the compromise with Alexander. Pseudo-Demosthenes' speech *On the treaty with Alexander* shows that the Panhellenic movement was an empty idea for a large portion of the Athenians. In contrast, terms such as 'autonomy' and 'freedom' were present at a higher rate than ever before.⁷ But in the face of only sparse contemporary historiographical sources, this speech is an important document for both Alexander's image as well as the political barometer in Athens during the first years of Alexander's expedition in Asia.⁸

Given the polemical nature of this issue, it would be easy to ascribe this text to Demosthenes. However, Demosthenes' political activities after 335 BC, along with philological criteria, close out this possibility.⁹ Equally complicated is the problem of the dating of the text. The Scholia mention that it had been written at the beginning of Alexander's reign. Nevertheless, this does not match the content of the speech,¹⁰ which is a crisis situation for Macedonia (see § 25) which may be associated with the revolt of the Spartan king Agis III. Therefore, a date of 331/330 BC, more precisely before the spring of 330 BC, when the uprising was crushed, appears the most plausible.¹¹

The occasion of this speech is the author's concern over the implementation of the terms of the treaty agreed between the Macedonian king and the

and Rome 37 (1990), 159–178; I. Worthington, "Greek Oratory, Revision of Speeches and the Problem of Historical Reliability", *Classica et Mediaevalia* 42 (1991), 55–74; G. Wirth, *Hypereides, Lykurg und die αὐτονομία der Athener* (Vienna: 1999).

- 7 See K. Raaflaub, *Die Entdeckung der Freiheit* (Munich: 1985); A.B. Bosworth, "Autonomia: the Use and abuse of political terminology", *Studi italiani di filologia classica* x (1992), 131–136; G.A. Lehmann, *Alexander der Grosse und die "Freiheit der Hellenen"* (Berlin: 2015).
- 8 M. Sordi, "L'orazione pseudodemostenica *Sui patti con Alessandro* e l'atteggiamento dei Greci primo di Issò", in *Alessandro Magno tra storia e mito*, ed. M. Sordi, (Milan: 1984), 29.
- 9 Dils, *Scholia Demosthenica*, 195, l. 1–7; Dion. Hal., *Dem.*, 57; Harpocr., s.v. προβολάς. The author himself is of little help on his own identity. The scholia consider Hegesippus or Hypereides as possible authors. See further J. Engels, *Studien zur politischen Biographie des Hypereides* (Cologne: 1993²), 87–90.
- 10 Dils, *Scholia Demosthenica*, 195, l. 18: ὁ μὲν γὰρ εἴρηται ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου καταστάσεως.
- 11 See E. Badian, "Agis III: Revisions and Reflections", in *Ventures into Greek History*, ed. I. Worthington (Oxford: 1994), 272–277. For E. Culasso-Gastaldi, *Sul trattato con Alessandro* (Padova: 1984), 163–170, the oration belongs to the early 3rd c. BC; contra M. Jehne, *Koine eirene* (Stuttgart: 1994), 155, n. 19.

Greeks. In order to expose the hypocrisy of Alexander's policy, he recalls the repeated violations of the peace by the Macedonians. As legally justified measures against this situation, he proposes to his fellow citizens both the termination of the treaty with Alexander and recourse to arms. This last information could refer to potentially joining the uprising on the side of the Spartan revolt.

The theme of tyranny emerges in the speech again and again.¹² Alexander is not only himself a tyrant, but he has forced, as in the case of Messene and of Lesbos, other Greek cities to return to tyranny; that constitutes a danger for the Athenians themselves. In order to depict this risk in a more effective manner, the orator compares the Macedonian rule even to the tyranny of the Peisistratids.¹³

The author is obviously motivated by vengeance, not against the Persians, but against the Macedonians. He postulates revenge for Chaeronea, and thus he is the antipode of mainstream intellectuals of the 4th century. Such men, Isocrates for example, were preaching the political and cultural unity of the Greeks and supported Alexander's "Panhellenic" expedition.¹⁴ His attitude towards monarchy distinguishes the author from the tendencies of the political philosophy of his own time. He presented monarchy in its most degenerate form, tyranny, and he defines it—in good Herodotean tradition—as evil *per se*.¹⁵

The identification of Alexander as a tyrant and the fight against him as a struggle for freedom were already elements of the Theban arguments during their uprising against Macedon in 335 BC. According to Diodorus the Thebans called on the Greeks to join in the common fight against this tyrant of Greece, which, according to the tyrant-typology, is characterized as a degenerate beast

12 Ps. Demosthenes, 17, 4: παρά τοὺς ὄρκους τοίνυν καὶ τὰς συνθήκας τὰς ἐν τῇ κοινῇ εἰρήνῃ γεγραμμένας Ἀλέξανδρος εἰς Μεσσήνην καταγαγὼν τοὺς Φιλιάδου παῖδας, ὄντας τυράννους, ἄρ' ἐφρόντισε τοῦ δικαίου, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐχρήσατο τῷ αὐτοῦ ἥθει τῷ τυραννικῷ, βραχὺ φροντίσας ὑμῶν καὶ τῆς κοινῆς ὁμολογίας;

13 Ps. Demosthenes, 17, 3. Some years before, 333/2 BC the Athenians had passed a law against tyranny and organized a cult of Democracy: M. Ostwald, "The Athenian Legislation against Tyranny and its Suppression", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 86 (1955), 103–128; C. Mossé, "A propos de la loi d'Eucratès sur la tyrannie", *Eirene* 8 (1970), 71–76. On the Peisistratids as a historical example, S. Perlman, "The Historical Example. Its Use and Importance as Political Propaganda in the Attic Orators", *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 7 (1961), 164–166; M. Nouhaud, *L'utilisation de l'histoire par les orateurs attiques* (Paris: 1982), 21–23.

14 On Alexander and Isocrates see Isoc. *Epist.* 5 and P. Merlan, "Isocrates, Aristotle and Alexander the Great", *Historia* 3 (1954), 60–81.

15 F. Hartog, *Le miroir d'Hérodote. Essai sur la représentation de l'autre* (Paris: 1980), 328–345.

(*apotheriôtheis*).¹⁶ For Pseudo-Demosthenes, Alexander is disrespectful not only towards human beings, but towards the gods as well: he is the master of perjury (*tês epiorkias autokrator*), which is obviously a parody of the title “*strategos autokrator*”.¹⁷

Even if the attribute “tyrant” was used by the orators of this period to defame a range of political opponents, it is important to note that this accusation against Alexander was pronounced before the execution of Callisthenes in 327 BC, and perhaps even before the death of Darius 330 BC, that is before the controversial “orientalization” and “degeneration” of the Macedonian king.¹⁸

Thus it can be stated in summary that the role of the author of this speech was crucial for the development of the early Alexander image. It was in Athens in the late 330s when for the first time Alexander was denigrated as a gangster (*latro*), an image that was to exert considerable influence on the Alexandrography.¹⁹ Some decades later, this same image was echoed in a fragment of a rhetorical exercise of the 3rd/2nd c. BC, which most probably represents a fictive reply to Alexander’s quest to be recognized as the leader of the Corinthian League just before the destruction of Thebes in 335 BC.²⁰ The author of this

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- 16 Diod. 17, 9, 5–6; on this passage see G. Wirth, *Diodor und das Ende des Hellenismus* (Vienna: 1993), 31, n. 111. See also Ps. Demades, *On the twelve years*, 42: φοβερόν θηρίον. On Alexander as wolf (μόδολυκος) and on perceptions of wolves see M. Detienne and J. Svenbro, “Les loups au festin ou la cité impossible”, in *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec*, ed. M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant (Paris: 1979), 215–237. On the typology of tyrants: Z. Petre, “Le comportement tyrannique”, *Eirene* 12 (1975), 563–571; P. Schmitt-Pantel, “Histoire de Tyran, ou comment la cité grecque construit ses marges”, in *Les marginaux et les exclus dans l’histoire*, ed. B. Vincent (Paris: 1977) 217–231; A.B. Breebaart, “Tyrants and monarchs in the Greek world of the fourth century BC”, in *Clio and Antiquity. History and Historiography of the Greek and Roman World*, ed. A.B. Breebaart (Hilversum: 1987), 9–31; E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford: 1989), 208.
- 17 Ps. Demosthenes 17, 12. See also H. Berve, *Die Tyrannis bei den Griechen* 1 (Munich: 1967), 239. On Alexander and the tyrant Dionysios of Syracuse: T.S. Brown, “Alexander’s Book Order (Plut. *Alex.* 8)”, *Historia* 16 (1967), 359–368; G. Schepens, “Das Alexanderbild in den Historikerfragmenten”, in *Politische Theorie und Praxis im Altertum*, ed. W. Schuller, (Darmstadt: 1998) 97–98.
- 18 On Alexander’s “degeneration”: P. Ceaucescu, “La double image d’Alexandre à Rome”, *Studi Clasice* XVI (1974), 153–168; W. Will, *Alexander der Große* (Stuttgart: 1986), 108–118. On the restitution of the statue of the Tyrannicides in Athens by Alexander: V. Azoulay, *Les tyrannicides d’Athènes* (Paris: 2014), 158.
- 19 See Plut. *Alex.* 55; Arr. *Anab.* 4, 10, 3; Sen., *Epist.* 94, 62: *latro gentium*; Sen. *De ben.* 13, 1–3, and Lucan *Phars.* 21: *felix praedo*.
- 20 *FrGrHist* 153 F 5 (P. Oxy. 216): ... Δουλείαν ἀντ’ ἑλευθερίας ἀντικατάλλάσσεισθαι; καὶ ποῦ τὸ περιμάχητον οἴχεται φρόνημα τῆς ἡγεμονίας; [...] ἡμῖν δ’ ἀπόρθητος | ἐστὶν ἡ δημοκρατία.

speech, who seems to be still firmly favouring the hegemonic role of Athens, represents Alexander as a young and arrogant king. Although victorious in the ordered battle, he behaves in a thoroughly non-hoplite manner (ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις νικήσας νεανικευέσθω). He is a cunning deceiver, and as such, he could possibly be taken seriously by the barbarians, but hardly by the Greeks.²¹ After all, Athens is accustomed to giving orders, not taking them.

Politics, Erotics and Education

In the 340s and 330s, two men dominated the political scene of Athens: Demosthenes and Aeschines. In their public speeches political thinking was often connected to personal invective, which is obviously a striking indication of the fluid boundaries between private and public sphere in antiquity.²² The “indiscreet” look at the private lives of politicians or rulers was always a political issue. For the present study these speeches are of immediate interest because they provide information about the young Alexander, mostly first-hand and from an “unofficial” point of view. Our first information is related to the so-called “Embassy affair”.

The political framework of the affair is the Athenian embassy to Philip in 346 BC, during the negotiations that led to the so-called Peace of Philocrates. As it turned out, however, because of the expansionist policy of Philip, this peace posed more problems than it resolved and led to an upset in the Athenian *demos*. The terms of the agreement were not favourable for the Athenians, who wanted to bring to account those who were responsible for this undesirable state of affairs.²³

[...] τὴν τῆς ἐλευθερίας τάξιν οὐκ ἐγκαταλείπομεν. |[ἐν] τοῖς ὅπλοις νικήσας | νεανικευέσθω, ταῖς δ' ἀπὸ | τῶν ἐπιστολῶν ἀπειλαῖς | τοὺς βαρβάρους ἐξαπατάτω. | ἡ δὲ τῶν Ἀθηναίων πόλις | ἐπιτάττειν, οὐχ ὑπακούειν | [ἐπίσταται]. This fragment could fit in the circumstances of the Chremonidean War, when Athens had to confront the Macedonian king Antigonos Gonatas. See also Ps. Demades, *On the twelve years* 56 and Himerios, 2 (ὑπὲρ Αἰσχίνου Δημοσθένους).

- 21 On Alexander's cunning see also Stobaios *Flor.* 4, 13, 48. On *apate* (cunning) as an ephebic feature but also as an historiographical pattern concerning tyrants, see P. Vidal-Naquet, “Flavius Arrien entre deux mondes”, in *Arrien, Histoire d'Alexandre*, tr. P. Savinel (Paris: 1984), 343–355 and N. Luraghi, “The Cunning Tyrant: The Cultural Logic of a Narrative Pattern”, in *Patterns of the Past*, ed. A. Moreno and R. Thomas (Oxford: 2014), 67–92.
- 22 See in general: F. de Polignac and P. Schmitt-Pantel, “Public et privé en Grèce ancienne: lieux, conduites, pratiques”, *Ktèma* 23 (1998), 5–13.
- 23 See D. McDowell, *Demosthenes: On the False Embassy (Oration 19)* (Oxford: 2000), 1–13;

Among the members of the Athenian delegation to Pella were Demosthenes, Aeschines and Philocrates. Demosthenes, Philip's opponent, voted against the Peace, the two others for it.²⁴ In early 345 BC the Athenians were in quite a bad political situation and therefore they searched for a scapegoat.²⁵ Demosthenes accused Aeschines of having been bribed by Philip in order to conclude the Peace treaty and to support the policy of the Macedonian king. Demosthenes tried to attack Aeschines' policy via the legal action of a *graphè parapresbeias*. But such an accusation could only be invoked by a member of the *boulè*;²⁶ for this reason Timarchos played the role of straw man for Demosthenes. However, Aeschines' counter accusation brought to light that Timarchos may have prostituted himself when he was young man, and consequently, according to Athenian law, he was barred from raising such an accusation.²⁷ So, the process was temporarily suspended and Aeschines gained considerable time in preparing his defence.

In his own speech *Against Timarchos*, Aeschines quoted Demosthenes' invective against both father and son, Philip and Alexander. Alexander's name is mentioned only parenthetically.²⁸ According to Aeschines, Demosthenes, this "effeminate man", by his metaphorical use of words (*metaphorais onomatôn*) ridicules the "child Alexander" (*paidos Alexandrou*), a fact that could eventually have had damaging consequences not only for himself, but also for the entire city.²⁹ According to Demosthenes' innuendo and slander (*aischras hypopsias*),

T. Paulsen, *Die Parapresbeia-Reden des Demosthenes und des Aischines* (Trier: 1999), 28–51; A. Efstathiou, "The 'Peace of Philocrates': The Assemblies of 18th and 19th Elaphbolion 346 BC Studying History through Rhetoric", *Historia* 53 (2004), 385–407.

24 E. Harris, *Aeschines and the Athenian Politics* (Oxford: 1995), 41–77.

25 H. Wankel, "Die Datierung des Prozesses gegen Timarchos (346/5 v. Chr.)", *Hermes* 116 (1988), 383–386.

26 M.H. Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes* (Oxford: 1991), 62–63.

27 On the law of *ἐταίρησις* see E. Cantarella, *Selon la nature, l'usage et la loi. La bisexualité dans le monde antique* (Paris: 1991), 79–85.

28 Aeschines, *In Timarch.* 166–169. See N. Fisher, *Aeschines, Against Timarchos. Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Oxford: 2001), 311–315.

29 Aeschines, *In Timarch.* 166–167: Πολὺς μὲν γὰρ ὁ Φίλιππος ἔσται, ἀναμειχθήσεται δὲ καὶ τὸ τοῦ παιδὸς ὄνομα Ἀλεξάνδρου [...] καίπερ οὐκ ὦν αὐτὸς ἀνὴρ, τὰς βλασφημίας ποιήσεται· ὅταν δὲ ταῖς εἰς τὸν παῖδα πεπραγματευμέναις μεταφοραῖς ὀνομάτων αἰσχρὰς ὑποψίας παρεμβάλλῃ, καταγέλαστον τὴν πόλιν ποιεῖ. Moral degeneration was part of political denigration; see K. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge Mass.: 1978), 19–109; Winkler, *Law*; D.M. Halperin, "The Democratic Body: Prostitution and Citizenship in Classical Athens", in *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love*, ed. D.M. Halperin (New York: 1989), 88–112; J. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes* (New York: 1997), 250–263.

during a banquet the young Alexander got into an argument with one of his comrades.³⁰ The phrase *rhêseis kai antikrouseis* may indicate both a verbal and physical confrontation.³¹ The quote from Demosthenes' invective is embedded in Aeschines' speech, and therefore it is hard to understand what Demosthenes meant and what pun he intended. But the fact that Demosthenes used insinuating words that take on the character of a snub (*skômma*), as well as the fact that he accused Aeschines of reacting like one in some kind of relationship rather than an ambassador, led to the surmise that it must have amounted to a sexual innuendo. This points at least the fact that Aeschines presented all of this as *aischras hypopsias*, a defamation, which obviously led him to defend the honour of the young Alexander.

Such an interpretation is justified by the subject of Aeschines' speech, which was in fact directed towards the reprehensible privacy of Timarchos. If Aeschines accused Timarchos of moral degeneration, then Demosthenes, by the same token, responded to this accusation by presenting his opponents, that is Philip and Alexander, as immoral. Only in such a context, could the allusion of Demosthenes be useful.

If this interpretation is correct, here can be found the earliest evidence about the intimate life of the young Alexander—more precisely, about his homosexuality. But what might it have meant to the Athenians that at that time an eleven year old child like Alexander had “sexual relations”? About

See also J. Roisman, *The Rhetoric of Manhood: Masculinity in the Attic Orators* (Berkeley: 2005), 1–17.

30 Aeschines, *In Timarch.*, 168: 'Ως γὰρ τὰς ἐμὰς εὐθύναις βλάπτων, ἃς ὑπὲρ τῆς πρεσβείας μέλλω διδόναι, φησί με, ὅτ' αὐτὸς πρῶην πρὸς τὴν βουλὴν ὑπὲρ τοῦ παιδὸς Ἀλεξάνδρου διεξήει, ὡς ἐν τῷ πότῳ ἡμῶν καθαρίζοι καὶ λέγοι ῥήσεις τινὰς καὶ ἀντικρούσεις πρὸς ἕτερον παῖδα, καὶ περὶ τούτων ἃ δὴ ποτε αὐτὸς ἐτύγχανε γινώσκων πρὸς τὴν βουλὴν ἀπεφάνετο, οὐχ ὡς συμπρεσβευτήν, ἀλλ' ὡς συγγενὴ τοῖς εἰς τὸν παῖδα σκώμμασιν ἀγανακτῆσαι. As ambassadors, Demosthenes and Aeschines must have participated in Macedonian symposia, where the presence of the young Alexander cannot be excluded; see Plut. *Alex.* 5. See also W. Heckel, “Marsyas of Pella, Historian of Macedon”, *Hermes* 108 (1980), 60. On Alexander playing cithara: Aelian., *vi*, 3, 32; Plut., *Per.*, 1, 5; Souda, s.v. Τιμόθεος. On *paides*' participation in the symposium: P. Schmitt-Pantel, *La cité au banquet* (Paris: 1992), 77–78; E. Koulakiotis, “Domination et résistance dans la cour d'Alexandre: le cas des *basilikoi paides*”, in *Esclavage antique et discriminations socio-culturelles*, ed. V. Anastasiadis and P. Doukellis (Bern: 2005), 180–181; N. Sawada, “Social Customs and Institutions”, in *A Companion to Ancient Macedonia*, ed. I. Worthington and J. Roisman (London: 2010), 405.

31 See *LSJ*, s.v. ἀντίκρουσις; the two words (ῥήσεις καὶ ἀντικρούσεις) are *hapax* in Aeschines. See also M.R. Dilts, ed., *Scholia Demosthenica*, 1 (Leipzig: 1983), 50 and E. Harris, “The Date of the Trial of Timarchus”, *Hermes* 113 (1985), 378.

this time Alexander had reached the age at which every noble male child (*pais*) could become the beloved (*eromenos*) of an adult. Such a practice was widespread in several Greek cities, including Athens, but also in Macedonia.³² In the case of Alexander the situation is probably more sensitive since he is the king's son. However, a similar ritual is attested also for the court at Pella.³³ Yet what Aeschines describes in his sparse representation, is not a relationship of the *eromenos* and *erastès* type. This was the framework for the education of the elite youth, preparing the new-comers in roles that could be reached in various stages of development and initiation. Aeschines speaks rather of two children, who exchanged the active and passive role and thus injured ostentatiously the boundaries of their age-classes. For the Athenians, this image was obviously shocking, because the overall principle of the age difference and a fundamental aspect of education were being questioned.³⁴ Such behaviour was not tolerated at any level of public life and was even slandered as being uncivilized. According to ancient perceptions, such sexual practices were characteristic of the world of savages and barbarians. It is this association that Demosthenes wanted to stir up amongst the Athenians.³⁵

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- 32 On *pais* as age group between 12 and 18 years: P. Vidal-Naquet, *Le chasseur noir* (Paris: 1991³), 151–175 and P. Vidal-Naquet, “Retour au chasseur noir”, in *La Grèce ancienne* 111, ed. J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet (Paris: 1992), 215–251; Cantarella, *Selon la nature*, 50–60, and M. Foucault, M. *Histoire de la sexualité*, 11: *L’usage des plaisirs* (Paris: 1984), 207–248. For Macedonia: Ph. Gauthier and M. Hatzopoulos, *La loi gymnasiarchique de Beroia* (Athens: 1998), 65–78; S. Psoma, “Entre l’armée et l’oikos: l’éducation dans le royaume de Macédoine”, in *Rois, cités et nécropoles. Institutions, rites et monuments en Macédoine*, ed. A.-M. Guimier-Sorbet, M.B. Hatzopoulos et Y. Morizot (Athens: 2006), 285–300.
- 33 M.B. Hatzopoulos, *Cultes et rites de passage en Macédoine* (Athens: 1994), 87–111. On pederasty at the Macedonian royal court in Pella see Theopompus *FGrHist* 115 F 225 and M. Flower, *Theopompus of Chios* (Oxford: 1995), 104–111.
- 34 E. Golden, “Slavery and Homosexuality at Athens”, *Phoenix* 38 (1984), 321–322; A. Schnapp, “Das Bild der Jugend in der griechischen Polis”, in *Geschichte der Jugend*, 1, ed. G. Levi and J.-Cl. Schmitt (Frankfurt am Main: 1996), 33; J. Reames-Zimmerman, “An Atypical Affair? Alexander the Great, Hephaestion Amyntoros and the Nature of Their Relationship”, *Ancient History Bulletin* 13 (1999), 81–96; E. Koulakiotis, “Devenir adulte, un défi perdu pour Alexandre. Sur quelques témoignages des orateurs attiques”, *Mélanges de l’Ecole Française de Rome (Moyen Âge)* 112 (2000), 13–26. See further J. Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love* (London: 2008), 360–380 and especially 365: “Dynasties and age-class systems simply don’t sit well together”.
- 35 F. Lissarrague, “The Sexual Life of Satyrs”, in *Before Sexuality. The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient World*, ed. Halperin et al. (Princeton: 1990), 64.

It can therefore be noted that Alexander's homosexuality is shown here as deviant sexual behaviour. This image was already around 345 BC on the agenda of the Athenian Boulè and had spread in the streets of Athens.³⁶ At this time Alexander had not yet begun his political life. For this reason, such defamation could arise regardless of the Athenian tyrant typology³⁷ and establish itself as part of the Alexandrography, as is testified by later evidence.³⁸ According to the topology of the invective, the opponent is characterized by a lack of virility. This is also the reason why Demosthenes presents the young Alexander as playing the cithara, since it is known that boys playing this musical instrument were often synonymous with young slaves who served as prostitutes during the *symposia*.³⁹ As we shall see below, all of these are aspects of Demosthenes' intention to portray Alexander as psychologically, intellectually and politically immature, a strikingly problematic boy.

Role Models, Masculinity and Religiosity

About ten years after the legal action against Timarchos, the personal confrontation between Demosthenes and Aeschines culminated. The occasion for this was a decree in honour of Demosthenes, who was to be honoured with a golden wreath for his service to the city after the Battle of Chaeronea and for his political career as a whole. The decree was initiated by a partisan friend of Demosthenes, Ctesiphon, in the beginning of 336 BC, and immediately blocked by Aeschines. For reasons that are not known to us, the political process, known also as the Crown Process, was interrupted, and resumed only in 330 BC, probably by Aeschines' initiative.⁴⁰ By this time the revolt of the Spartan king Agis III

36 Aeschines, *In Timarch.* 168: ὅτ' αὐτὸς πρόην πρὸς τὴν βουλὴν ὑπὲρ τοῦ παιδὸς Ἀλεξάνδρου διεξήγει.

37 See e.g. W. Ameling, "Tyrannen und schwangere Frauen", *Historia* 35 (1986), 507–508.

38 See Alexander's boyfriends Aristion (Aeschin. *In Ctes.* 162), Bagoas (Dicaearchos *ap.* Athen., 12, 537 d–540 a; Athen., 13, 603 a–b) and Krobylos (Plut., *Alex.*, 22). On Alexander's sexuality see H. Berve, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage*, I (Munich: 1926), 10–11; *contra* Tarn, *Alexander der Große*, 628–639, esp. 634: "Es gibt somit nicht den allergeringsten Anlaß dazu, Alexander einen Homosexuellen zu nennen." See further Gunderson, *Orators*, 187–188. On female features of Alexander's iconography, Stewart, *Faces*, 74 and 87–88.

39 Davidson, *Love*, 363.

40 G.L. Cawkwell, "The Crowning of Demosthenes", *Classical Quarterly* 19 (1969), 163–182; H. Wankel, *Demosthenes' Rede für Ktesiphon über den Kranz* I (Heidelberg: 1976), 25. For

had already been repressed and the position of the Macedonians on the Greek mainland so far secured.

In the debate, which is reflected in the forensic speeches, it is therefore an 'all or nothing' situation. Aeschines and Demosthenes review the whole political condition of the 340s and 330s and their texts are an important barometer of the public mood during the reign of Alexander. This is a fact that illustrates the eminent value of these sources.⁴¹ In his speech *Against Ctesiphon*, Aeschines aims to expose the policy of his political rival, Demosthenes, as inconsistent and ultimately absurd, especially after Philip's death, and he accuses Demosthenes of honouring the murderers of king Philip and making fun of the young Alexander.⁴²

It seems that Demosthenes had depicted Alexander as a new Margites, who after his accession to the throne did nothing but loiter in the streets of Pella, spending his time with oracles and attending sacrifices. This raises the question of who this Margites was and why the similarity to Alexander. It is known that Margites was an epic hero of a homonymous work falsely ascribed to Homer.⁴³ The few surviving fragments of the work lead to the conclusion that it was a parody of the Homeric ideal.⁴⁴ This figure, which is characterized by versatility

E. Harris, "Law and Oratory", in *Persuasion: Greek Rhetorics in Action*, ed. I. Worthington (London: 1994), 130–150, this was due to juristic reasons. See also N. Sawada, "Athenian Politics in the Age of Alexander the Great: A Reconsideration of the Trial of Ctesiphon", *Chiron* 26 (1996), 66–70.

41 Wankel, *Demosthenes I*, 33; W. Schuller, "Der Kranzprozeß des Jahres 330 v. Chr., oder: Der Abgesang auf die klassische Polis", in *Große Prozesse im antiken Athen*, ed. L. Burkhardt and J. von Ungern-Sternberg (Munich: 2000), 190–200; H. Yunis, *Demosthenes, On the Crown* (Cambridge: 2001), 1–16.

42 Aeschin. *In Ctes.* 160: 'Ἐπειδὴ δ' ἐτελεύτησε μὲν Φίλιππος, Ἀλέξανδρος δ' εἰς τὴν ἀρχὴν κατέστη, πάλιν αὖ τερατευόμενος ἱερὰ μὲν ἰδρύσατο Πausanίου, εἰς αἰτίαν δὲ εὐαγγελίων θυσίας τὴν βουλὴν κατέστησεν, ἐπωνυμίαν δ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ Μαργίτην ἐτίθετο, ἀπετόλμα δὲ λέγειν ὡς οὐ κινήσεται ἐκ Μακεδονίας. ἀγαπᾶν γὰρ αὐτὸν ἔφη ἐν Πέλλῃ περιπατοῦντα καὶ τὰ σπλάγχνα φυλάττοντα. Καὶ ταυτὶ λέγειν ἔφη οὐκ εἰκάζων, ἀλλ' ἀκριβῶς εἰδὼς ὅτι αἵματός ἐστιν ἡ ἀρετὴ ὦνία, αὐτὸς οὐκ ἔχων αἷμα, καὶ θεωρῶν τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον οὐκ ἐκ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου φύσεως, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς ἐαυτοῦ ἀνανδρίας. On Philip's assassination and Alexander's role in it: E. Badian, "The Death of Philipp II", *Phoenix* 17 (1963), 244–250; W. Will, "Ein sogenannter Vatermörder. Nochmals zur Ermordung Philipps", in *Zu Alexander dem Großen*, ed. W. Will (Amsterdam: 1988), 219–232.

43 The work is dated between the late 8th and 6th c. BC: L. Radermacher, "Margites", *Real Enzyklopaedie*, XIV, 2, (1930), 1706–1708; H. Langerbeck, "Margites", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 63 (1958), 33–63; A. Gostoli, *Margite* (Pisa: 2007), 11–13.

44 M. Centanni, *Il romanzo di Alessandro* (Turin: 1991), 240; Gostoli, *Margite*, 9–10.

and stupidity, being talentless, choleric and arrogant, was the epitome of the Fool.⁴⁵ Therefore, Margites was in a sense a Homeric hero, but an anti-Achilles. It is well known that the world of Homer had fascinated Alexander from childhood. Alexander's self-stylization as *Achilles redivivus* cannot be excluded and must not have escaped the notice of his contemporaries.⁴⁶ Through his biting mockery, Demosthenes wanted to make a fool of Alexander and his heroic aspirations.

In addition to this Homeric context, Demosthenes touches on another point here. Namely, it resonates with the assertion that Alexander, after he had been proclaimed king, cared only for the offering of sacrifices. In Aeschines' report it is not clear whether this is to be regarded as part of Margites' character, or whether it relates to Alexander personally.⁴⁷ This is in fact the first allusion to Alexander's piety, which was probably influenced by his mother Olympias.⁴⁸ What Aeschines quotes shows that the image of the deeply religious, even superstitious, Alexander was widespread quite early.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, it should be noted that Alexander was king of the Macedonians and chief priest of his

45 Plat. *Alcib. minor*, 147 a; cf. Arist. *EN*, 1141 a; On Alexander's πολυπράγμοσύνη: H. Tonnet, *Recherches sur Arrien. Sa personnalité et ses écrits atticiques* (Amsterdam: 1987), 532–533.

46 See Plut. *Alex.* 2,1, on Alexander's ancestry going back to Achilles. On the heroic past and its importance for the Macedonian society: M. Errington, *Geschichte Makedoniens* (Munich: 1986), 11–17; S.E. Alcock, "The Heroic Past in a Hellenistic Present", in *Hellenistic Constructs*, ed. P. Cartledge et al., (Berkeley: 1997), 20–34. On Alexander and Homer: J. Rehork, "Homer, Herodot und Alexander", in *Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte und ihren Nachleben*, ed. R. Stiehl and H.E. Stier (Berlin: 1969), 251–260. On Alexander's *imitatio Achilli* see Dio Chr., 2, 14–18 and Arr., *An.*, 7, 14, 4. See further Stewart, *Faces*, 81; T. Hölscher, *Ideal und Wirklichkeit in den Bildnissen Alexanders des Großen* (Heidelberg: 1971), 25–27; A.B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire. The Reign of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge: 1988) 19–20 and 281–283; W. Ameling, "Alexander und Achilleus. Eine Bestandaufnahme", in *Zu Alexander dem Großen*, ed. W. Will (Amsterdam: 1988), 657–692; for Maitland, *Achilles* and W. Heckel, "Alexander, Achilles and Heracles: Between Myth and History", in *East and West in the World Empire of Alexander*, ed. P. Wheatley and E. Baynham (Oxford: 2015), 21–33, this was a later literary invention.

47 So Langerbeck, *Margites*, 39; 57.

48 S.R. Asirvatham, "Olympias' snake and Callisthenes' stand. Religion and politics in Plutarch's Life of Alexander", in *Between Magic and Religion*, ed. S. Asirvatham et al., (Lanham: 2001), 93–126; E. Carney, *Olympias* (New York and London: 2006), 88–103.

49 See L. Edmunds, "The Religiosity of Alexander", *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 12 (1971), 363–391; D. Aubriot, "Quelques observations sur la religion d'Alexandre (par rapport à la tradition classique) à partir de Plutarque et d'Arrien", *Mètis* NS 1 (2003), 225–229; E. Fredricksmeyer, "Alexander's religion and divinity", in *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great*, ed. J. Roisman (New York: 2003), 253–278.

people. Religious activities were therefore nothing exceptional.⁵⁰ It is not ruled out that Alexander, after the murder of Philip, performed religious acts and rituals which were perceived as exaggerated.

The comparison with Margites has perhaps another hint. The Scholia describe this figure as someone who has failed in his sexual escapades with the opposite sex, especially in the first night after his marriage, probably because of the fear of his mother.⁵¹ This is to be related to the “gossip writer” Hieronymus of Rhodes, who mentions that Olympias had hired an infamous courtesan to arouse interest in women in the young prince, because she feared that her son was too womanlike (*gynnis*).⁵² The comparison with Margites could therefore also be an allusion to the great influence of Olympias on her son—and thus on Alexander’s alleged emotional and sexual immaturity. Plutarch probably understood that implicitly when he wrote that Demosthenes had called Alexander “boy and Margites”.⁵³

The word “boy” (*pais*) seems to describe Alexander twofold: on the one hand positively, to express admiration for the young king; on the other hand negatively, to emphasize his puerility. But in Demosthenes’ mouth this word could allude to more than just a lack of personal maturity, since *pais* could also mean “slave”.⁵⁴ In this way, Alexander’s position as king was politically and institutionally questioned, and for the Athenian orator Alexander could behave as a page but not as a king.⁵⁵ At first, in 336 BC, the irony of Demosthenes’ accusation had not missed its target. However, in 330 BC, after the battle of Gaugamela and as Aeschines repeated his opponent’s taunts, the Athenians were forced to accept that they now had to deal with an *enfant terrible* from Macedonia.

50 On the religious duties of the Macedonian king: E.N. Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus. The Emergence of Macedon* (Princeton: 1990), 231–252; E. Koulakiotis, “Aspects de la divination dans la monarchie macédonienne”, *Kernos* 26 (2013), 123–138.

51 M.R. Dilts, ed., *Scholia in Aeschinem* (Stuttgart: 1992), 143: Μαργίτην φησὶν ἄνθρωπον γεγονέναι, ὃς ἐτῶν πολλῶν γενόμενος οὐκ ᾔδη, ὅστις αὐτὸν ἔτεκεν, πότερον ὁ πατὴρ ἢ ἡ μήτηρ, τῇ δὲ γαμετῇ οὐκ ἐχρήτο· δεδιέναι γὰρ ἔλεγε μὴ διαβάλλοι αὐτὸν πρὸς τὴν μητέρα.

52 Athen. 10, 435, a. See also Aelian, *VH*, 12, 34. On the afterlife of this topic see S. Müller, “Asceticism, Gallantry, or Polygamy? Alexander’s Relationship with Women as a Topos in Medieval Romance Traditions”, *The Medieval History Journal* 11 (2008), 259–287.

53 Plut. *Demosth.* 23: καὶ τὸ βῆμα κατεῖχεν ὁ Δημοσθένης, καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἐν Ἀσίᾳ στρατηγοὺς τοῦ βασιλέως ἔγραφε, τὸν ἐκείθεν ἐπεγείρων πόλεμον Ἀλεξάνδρῳ, παῖδα καὶ Μαργίτην ἀποκαλῶν αὐτόν. Aeschin. *In Ctes.* 164 refers also to Demosthenes’ letters.

54 E. Golden, “Pais, Child and Slave”, *Antiquité Classique* 54 (1985), 91–104.

55 See S. Le Bohec, “Remarques sur l’âge de la majorité chez les rois de Macédoine”, in *Ancient Macedonia* v (1993), 779–788.

Philosophy of History

In his invective against Demosthenes, as it is reflected in his speech *Against Ctesiphon*, Aeschines criticized not only the policy of his opponent, but also his personality. To this end, he compares antithetically Demosthenes' and Alexander's respective characters: the cowardice (*anandria*) of the corrupt politician is confronted by the virtue (*aretè*) of the general and king. In this way Alexander's nature (*physis Alexandrou*) transforms and becomes a symbol of virility.⁵⁶ Thus Aeschines stands at the beginning of a long rhetorical tradition, with wide-ranging repercussions up to the period of the Roman Empire, a tradition that put virtue and fortune at the centre of the debate about Alexander's life and career.⁵⁷

References to Alexander occur also in two other places within Aeschines' speech. As the speaker describes the situation in Greece during the Spartan revolt (331/330 BC), he presents the Macedonian in a manner as if at that time he would have found himself already at the northernmost point of the Earth, almost outside of the inhabited world.⁵⁸ The hyperbole of the sentence certainly reflects the taste of the time for the sensational, but we can also accept that the Macedonian king and his expedition had already won among his contemporaries a mythical dimension.⁵⁹

For Aeschines this is an occasion to make a digression and look retrospectively at his own time; it is a time of fundamental historical changes (*metabolaí*), for which Philip, but especially Alexander, is responsible. For Aeschines, the destruction of Thebes, the punishment of the Spartans and finally the victory over the Great Persian King belong already to the realm of legend.⁶⁰ In this way, Aeschines distinguished himself from his contemporaries regarding

56 Aeschin. In *Timarch*. 160. Cf. Plut., *De Alex. fort.* 343 A. According to Plut. *Alex.* 11, 6, Alexander shows Demosthenes that he passes quickly through age classes: εἰπὼν ὅτι Δημοσθένει, παῖδα μὲν αὐτὸν ἕως ἦν ἐν Ἰλλυριοῖς καὶ Τριβαλλοῖς ἀποκαλοῦντι, μεῖράκιον δὲ περὶ Θετταλίαν γενόμενον, βούλεται πρὸς τοῖς Ἀθηναίων τείχεσιν ἀνὴρ φανῆναι.

57 A. D'Angelo, ed., *Plutarco. La fortuna o la virtù di Alessandro Magno, Prima Orazione* (Naples: 1998); Koulakiotis, *Alexandermythos*, 163–169; D. Gilley, *Damn With Faint Praise: A Historical Commentary on Plutarch's On the Fortune or Virtue of Alexander the Great* (Diss. University of Missouri: 2009).

58 Aeschin. In *Ctes.* 165: ὁ δ' Ἀλέξανδρος ἕξω τῆς ἄρκτου καὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὀλίγου δεῖν πάσης μεθαισθήκει.

59 Cf. Dinarch. In *Dem.* 34, and Curtius, IX, 3, 7: *paene in ultimo mundi fine consistimus*. See also Romm, *Edges*, 110.

60 Aeschin. In *Ctes.* 132: Τοιγάροι τί τῶν ἀνελπίστων καὶ ἀπροσδοκῆτων ἐφ' ἡμῶν οὐ γέγονεν; οὐ γὰρ βίον γε ἡμεῖς ἀνθρώπινον βεβιώκαμεν, ἀλλ' εἰς παραδοξολογίαν τοῖς μεθ' ἡμᾶς ἐσομένοις ἔφυ-

perceptions of time and history. Whereas for the larger part of his fellow citizens, after a glorious past, Athens confronted a hideous present, Aeschines questions this pessimistic view and rather mythologized the present. Herein Aeschines was ahead of his time.⁶¹ However, the reason for the changes, which describe Aeschines, is only the *hybris* of the Persian king,⁶² of the Thebans and of the Spartans,⁶³ who thus provoked the effect of theodicy. Their punishment was exacted by a moderate Alexander, in which Aeschines sees a kind of instrument of the gods for the restoration of the secular order (*dikaiôs*). The miraculous and providential action of Alexander is described here for the first time in a rhetorical text. This image shows many similarities with that of the court historiographer Callisthenes, who allegedly published, around the time of the Crown Process, the first part of his Alexander history, in which was highlighted Alexander's central position in world affairs.⁶⁴ Aeschines' comments testify the widespread impact of the royal propagandist.

Fortune and Virtue

In his reply, as it is reflected in his speech *On the Crown*, Demosthenes had the opportunity to defend his policies and also to promote his own "philosophy of history".⁶⁵ For Aeschines it was *hybris* that leads man to changes; for Demosthenes *Tychè*, Fortune directs historical developments in an unpredictable and irrational way.⁶⁶ In addition to this new, general and impersonal deity of the

μεν. For L. Canfora, *Per la cronologia di Demostene* (Bari: 1968) 103–115, the paragraphs 132–134 should be considered as later interpolations; *contra* Wankel, *Demosthenes I*, 34–37 and 49.

61 See P. Vidal-Naquet, "Temps des dieux et temps des hommes", in *La Grèce ancienne* 11, ed. J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet (Paris: 1992), 135–163.

62 See Aeschin. *In Ctes.* 132. On Alexander as "Anti-Xerxes" see C. Jacob, "Alexandre et la maîtrise de l'espace", *Quaderni di Storia* 34 (1991), 20–21.

63 Aeschin., *In Ctes.*, 133.

64 G. Wirth, "Geschichtsschreibung", in *Kleines Wörterbuch des Hellenismus*, ed. H.H. Schmitt and E. Vogt (Wiesbaden: 1993), 223. See also L. O'Sullivan, "Callisthenes and Alexander the Invincible God, in *East and West in the World Empire of Alexander*", ed. P. Wheatley and E. Baynham (Oxford: 2015), 35–52.

65 Dem. *De cor.* 252–275.

66 Dem. *De cor.* 272 τὴν ἀπάντων, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀνθρώπων τύχην κοινὴν καὶ φορὰν τινα πραγμάτων χαλεπὴν καὶ οὐχ οἷαν ἔδει τούτων αἰτίαν ἡγεῖσθαι. See also P. Treves, "Il senso della Tychè nella trasformazione del mondo greco alla fine dell'età classica", in *Tra Grecia e Roma. Temi antichi e metodologie moderne*, ed. P. Treves (Rome: 1980), 155–165.

4th century BC, there are also a number of individual fates which often exist in antagonistic terms to one other. Demosthenes compares his own fate with that of Aeschines, and the fate of Athens with that of Greece. In his view, the irresistible *Tychè* of Alexander confronts not only the fortune of the Greeks, but also to that of all humanity.⁶⁷ Because of his personal luck, Alexander is the “happy other” (ἡνὸς τῆς ἡσυχίας),⁶⁸ the conqueror and ruler of the world (*dynastes*) is facing all humanity, which is still divided into Greeks and barbarians.⁶⁹ This image could only but remind the audience of the “happy tyrant” trope, a notion certainly recognized by the Athenians.⁷⁰ The issue of Alexander’s *Tychè* is readdressed in Demosthenes’ letters, some years later. It seems that this was Demosthenes’ response to the *aretè* interpretation of Aeschines. By that, we can see that this debate was actually inaugurated long before the rhetorical treatises by Plutarch.⁷¹

Deification

Alexander’s deification is an important component of his biography and is at the beginning of a complex phenomenon which may be summarized under the term “ruler cult”.⁷² It is beyond the scope of this study to give a complete overview of all or even the most important work in this field of research. Yet,

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- 67 Dem. *De cor.* 323: καὶ ἐν οἷς ἀτυχησάντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἡνὸς τῆς ἡσυχίας. See also Dem. *De cor.* 253: ἐγὼ τὴν τῆς πόλεως τύχην ἀγαθὴν ἡγοῦμαι, [...] τὴν μέντοι τῶν πάντων ἀνθρώπων, ἣ νῦν ἐπέχει, χαλεπὴν καὶ δεινὴν· τίς γὰρ Ἑλλήνων ἢ τίς βαρβάρων οὐ πολλῶν κακῶν ἐν τῷ παρόντι πεπεύραται;
- 68 At that time Demosthenes could not speak openly about Alexander, however it is clear that by the word ἔτερος is meant Alexander: Wankel, *Demosthenes II*, 1340 and 1352; see also S. Usher, *Demosthenes, On the Crown* (London: 1993, 277); Yunis, *Demosthenes*, 290.
- 69 On this polarity see K. Vlassopoulos, *Greeks and Barbarians* (Cambridge: 2013).
- 70 On the tyrant as son of Tychè: P. Vidal-Naquet, “Œdipe à Athènes”, in *Œdipe et ses mythes*, ed. P. Vidal-Naquet and J.-P. Vernant (Paris: 1988), 103.
- 71 See Arrian, *Ind.* 20 11 [= Nearch. *FGrHist* 133 F 1], about Alexander’s irrational luck. On Alexander and Lysippus’ statue of Kairos: G. Zanetto, “Kairos e Tyche: immagini e idee”, in *I Greci II*, 3, ed. S. Settis (Turin: 1998), 525–526.
- 72 F.W. Walbank, “Könige als Götter. Überlegungen zum Herrscherkult von Alexander bis Augustus”, *Chiron* 17 (1987), 365–382; C. Habicht, *Gottmenschen und griechische Städte* (Munich: 1970²); A. Chaniotis, “The Divinity of Hellenistic Rulers”, in *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*, ed. A. Erskine, 431–445; K. Buraselis and S. Aneziri, “Die griechische und hellenistische Apotheose”, *Thesaurus Cultum et Rituum Antiquorum II* (2005), 158–185; T. Gnoli and F. Muccioli, eds., *Divinizzazione, culto del sovrano e apoteosi. Tra Antichità*

we will briefly describe the most important steps of the development of this idea in order to contextualize the testimonies of the Attic orators.⁷³

Alexander's intense relationship with the divine world begins with his own birth, and, as we saw above, was significantly influenced by his mother. Olympias probably divulged the rumours about Alexander's allegedly divine father. Heracles, the ancestor of the Argead Dynasty, must have acted also as a role model for apotheosis. The first attempts at his deification had likely been initiated in 334/333 BC by the "liberated" Greek cities in Asia Minor.⁷⁴ The king's divine origin and his invincibility were confirmed by a number of oracles and rituals (Delphi, Gordion, Didyma, Erythrai and Xanthos), of which Siwa and the coronation at Memphis was undoubtedly the culmination.⁷⁵ The next step, *proskynesis*, was planned to be Alexander's first attempt to transcend his position as king of the Macedonians towards the sacral kingship of the Orientals, whereas experiences in India could have also played a role.⁷⁶ The last stages of this development were unquestionably the events around 324 BC, when Alexander was to be awarded divine honours. Actually, it is not clear if this was a real deification or a mere recognition of his divine nature. However, it is certain that such a development would have affected the political situation within every Greek city-state, and especially Athens. This combined with the royal so-called "Exiles' Decree", which imposed the return of a great number of Greek exiles to their respective fatherlands, as well as with the dubious activity of Alexander's treasurer, Harpalus, which caused a crisis in relations between Athens and the king.⁷⁷ However, at the initiative of Demosthenes and perhaps Demades,

e Medioevo (Bologna: 2014); I. Petrovic, "Deification—Gods or Men?", in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*, ed. E. Eidinow and J. Kindt (Oxford: 2015), 429–443.

73 Diog. Laert., 6, 63: ψηφισαμένων Ἀθηναίων Ἀλέξανδρον Διόνυσον, "καμέ", ἔφη, "Σάραπιν ποιήσατε".

74 See Stewart, *Faces*, 98–102.

75 See C. Leroy, "Alexandre à Xanthos", in *Actes du Colloque sur la Lycie antique* (Paris: 1980), 51–61; L. Prandi, "Gli oracoli sulla spedizione asiatica di Alessandro", *Chiron* 20 (1990), 345–369.

76 E. Badian, "The Deification of Alexander the Great", in *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honor of Charles F. Edson*, ed. H. Dell (Thessaloniki: 1981), 27–71; A.B. Bosworth, "Alexander, Euripides and Dionysos: The Motivation for Apotheosis", in *Transitions to Empire*, ed. W. Wallace and E.M. Harris (Norman: 1996), 140–166.

77 S. Jaschinski, *Alexander und Griechenland unter dem Eindruck der Flucht von Harpalus* (Diss. Bonn: 1981); I. Worthington, "Harpalus Affair and the Macedonian Hegemony", in *Ventures into Greek History*, ed. I. Worthington (Oxford: 1994), 307–330; C. Blackwell, *In the Absence of Alexander. Harpalus and the Failure of Macedonian Authority* (New York: 1999).

a compromise was found: in order to avoid retaliation, the Athenians would accept a cult for Alexander as an “invincible god”.⁷⁸ Thereupon, some time later in 324 BC, Demosthenes and Demades were accused of having been bribed.⁷⁹ As a result of the political process, which took place during the springtime in 323 BC, they had to leave Athens. During this process, Dinarchus and Hyperides were the prosecutors. From their speeches, it can be understood that, at least in Athens, Demosthenes and Demades introduced Alexander’s deification for tactical reasons.⁸⁰ However, it remains open as to whether such a cult was ever actually enacted.⁸¹

Once again, we have biased evidence. In his indictment Hyperides quotes the words of Demosthenes during the discussion about the deification of Alexander. Demosthenes is reported to have said that Alexander, if he wanted to, could be worshipped not only as a son of Zeus, but also of Poseidon; furthermore he could be honoured with an *eikon*, i.e. perhaps a cult statue.⁸² The idea of Alexander’s divine father was already known, though not as the son of Poseidon. The only thing that could justify such an aspiration was the dubious episode at the Pamphylian Sea, when the water was said to have withdrawn in order to allow Alexander’s army to pass.⁸³ The notion of a triple paternity (Philip, Zeus, Poseidon) as mentioned in the *Alexander Romance* (Philip, Zeus,

78 G. Schepens, “Zum Problem der ‘Unbesiegbareit’ Alexanders des Großen”, *Ancient Society* 20 (1989), 15–53. For O’sullivan, *Callisthenes*, 50, this resonates Callisthenes’ work and his presentation of Alexander with divine filiation and invincibility.

79 See H. Wankel, “Die Korruption in der rednerischen Topik und in der Realität des klassischen Athen” in *Korruption im Altertum*, ed. W. Schuller (Munich: 1982), 32–33.

80 A.B. Bosworth, *Alexander and the East* (Oxford: 1998), 166.

81 See Ps. Demades, *On the twelve years*, 48; Aelian, *VH*, v, 12; Athen. vi, 251 b. See also R. Parker, *Athenian Religion. A History* (Oxford: 1996), 256–258. On Hephaistion’s cult: E. Voutyras, “ΗΦΑΙΣΤΙΩΝ ΗΡΩΣ”, *Egnatia* 2 (1990), 123–173; M. Mari, “Macedonians and pro-Macedonians in early Hellenistic Athens: reflections on εὐσέβεια”, in *The Macedonians in Athens 322–229 BC*, ed. O. Palagia and S. Tracy (Oxford: 2003), 82–87.

82 Hyper. *In Dem.* 31–32: τότε ἔν τῳ δήμῳ συγχωρῶν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ καὶ τοῦ Διὸς καὶ τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος εἶναι εἰ βούλ[ο]ιτο, [κα]ὶ ἀφικομένου ... ἐβούλετ[ο] στήσαι εἰκό[να] Ἀλεξάνδρου βασιλ[έ]ως τοῦ ἀνιχέτου θε[ο]ῦ; see also Dinarch., *In Dem.*, 94. See further M.A. Levi, “Theos Aniketos. Aspetti della legittimità di Alessandro Magno”, in *Alessandro Magno tra storia e mito*, ed. M. Sordi (Rome: 1984), 53–58 and Chaniotis, *Divinity*, 439–440. For Azoulay, *Tyrannicides*, 161–162, the restitution of the statue of the Tyrannicides could be a response to this *eikon*. At any rate, we have to consider that *agalma* is usually the most appropriate term for a cult statue: Stewart, *Faces*, 100–102; 208; I. Worthington, “Hyperides 5.32 and Alexander the Great’s statue”, *Hermes* 129 (2001), 129–131.

83 On Alexander and Poseidon see Arrian, *Ind.* 20, 10.

Dionysos or Nectanebo),⁸⁴ does not seem plausible here. Thus, Demosthenes' words should be interpreted in a different manner: Very probably, he did not mean a combined paternity, but two different kinds of filiation.

If one reflects that many of the sons of Poseidon were feared as notorious monsters, like the Cyclops Polyphemus, then this statement could perhaps be considered more as a parody of the Zeus-sonship.⁸⁵ A similar reaction is attested by the Spartan Damis, who allegedly responded to Alexander's deification by saying "If Alexander wants to be a god, let him be!"⁸⁶ This is then a good example of the very diplomatic behaviour of Athenian politicians, and it is not the only one: as Demades, who was a political companion of Demosthenes by that time, heard about the death of Alexander, he reportedly said: "That's impossible, because in this case, the whole earth would smell (ὠζειν) of his body".⁸⁷ The motif of a fragrant corpse is certainly an established feature of divine men. However, once again, we have to be cautious about the real meaning of such sayings. After Alexander's death, Demades confessed that he proposed Alexander's deification only because he was forced by armed Macedonian influences to do so.⁸⁸ Against this background, Demades' commentary on Alexander's death proves to be ambiguous, since the term ὠζειν could be interpreted also in the sense in which the great satirist Lucian used it, namely within the meaning of "to stink".⁸⁹

In the testimonies of the Athenian orators, it can hardly be sure where the admiration ends and where the sarcasm begins. In their seemingly obedient and flattering attitude towards the kings, there was subtlety, guile and subversive intent. This is especially valid for the complex phenomenon of ruler deification.⁹⁰ The Athenians seemed to have been aware of their own role as a cultural paradigm within the broader Greek world which is why, some decades

84 See C. Jouanno, "L'homme aux trois pères ou les ambiguïtés du Roman", in *Généalogies mythiques*, ed. D. Auger and S. Said (Paris: 1998), 447–463.; T. Hölscher, *Herrschaft und Lebensalter. Alexander der Große: Politisches Image und anthropologisches Modell* (Basel: 2009), 54–66.

85 Phocion had already compared Alexander to Cyclops: Plut. *Phoc.* 17.

86 Plut. *Apophth. Lac.* 219 E; see also Aelian, *VH*, 11, 19, and Parker, *Religion*, 257.

87 Demetr., *De eloc.*, 283: Οἶόν ἐστι τὸ οὐ τέθνηκεν Ἀλέξανδρος, ὃ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι· ὠζειν γὰρ ἂν ἡ οἰκουμένη τοῦ νεκροῦ; see also Plut., *Phoc.*, 22; Hamilton, *Plutarch*, 11; G. Bounoure, "L'odeur du héros. Un thème ancien de la légende d'Alexandre", *Quaderni di Sroria* 17 (1983), 3–46.

88 Demetr. *De eloc.* 284: τοῦτο τὸ ψήφισμα οὐκ ἐγὼ ἔγραψα, ἀλλ' ὁ πόλεμος τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρου δόρατι γράφων; see also Val. Max., 7, 2, 13.

89 Lucian, *Dial. Mort.*, 12, 5.

90 See also the sayings attributed to the orators Pytheas (Plut., *Praec. ger. rei publ.*, 804 B) and Lycurgus (Plut. *Vit. x orat.* 842 D).

after Alexander's death, during the Chremonidean War, the message of the orators to the Hellenistic kings was more or less that "the way for mortals to heaven passes through Athens".⁹¹

The Philosopher King?

The reverberation of these anecdotes in the Athenian streets could only but reinforce the image of a prodigious Alexander.⁹² This can be deduced by a letter from the Corpus Demosthenicum written in late 323 BC, after Alexander's death and when Demosthenes was in exile.⁹³ The death of the world ruler caused a general uprising of the Greek cities, known as Lamian War. During the preparations for this war, Demosthenes tried to come back to Athens and to regain the favour of his fellow citizens. In order to do so, he uses once again the theme of *Tychè*. If, in his speech *On the Crown*, this was an abstract necessity, *Tychè* has now become personalized.⁹⁴ She is the deity that must be challenged in order to bestow her favour and she is not especially irrational. In this letter, Demosthenes relates Alexander's success to qualities of his character. *Tychè* had favoured the dead king because he was bold, working painstakingly (πονῶν) and in doing so he was effective (τῷ πάντα κατορθοῦν): Alexander is then not the decadent king of Asia, but quite the opposite: he stands for the manlike Greek *aretè*.⁹⁵

91 Athen. VI 250 f: τὴν δ' ἐπὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνθρώπους φέρουσαν ὁδὸν Ἀθηναίους εἰδέναι μόνους.

92 Gunderson, *Orators*, 188–189.

93 There is a long discussion on the authenticity of Demosthenes' letters; *Epist.* 1–4 seem to be genuine: Goldstein, *Letters*, 180–181; R. Clavaud, *Démosthène, Lettres et Fragments* (Paris: 1987), 50; P. Treves, "Apocrifi Demostenici II. Le lettere di Demostene", *Athenaeum* 14 (1936), 233–251. On the political constellation at that time: W. Will, *Athen und Alexander* (Munich: 1983), 127–132; N.G. Ashton, "The Lamian War: a false start?", *Antichthon* 17 (1983), 47–63.

94 See S.P. Kershaw, *Personification in the Hellenistic World: Tyche, Kairos, Nemesis* (Diss. Bristol: 1986). On *Tychè* cult in Athens: IG II² 333.

95 Dem., *Epist.* 1, 13: νῦν μέντοι πάντα ἔξιν καλῶς ἐλπίζω. καὶ γὰρ εἴ τις ὑπείληφεν εὐτυχὴ τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον τῷ πάντα κατορθοῦν, ἐκεῖνο λογισάσθω, ὅτι πράττων καὶ πονῶν καὶ τολμῶν, οὐχὶ καθήμενος ἡτύχει. νῦν τοίνυν τεθνεώτος ἐκείνου ζητεῖ τινὰς ἢ τύχη μεθ' ὧν ἔσται. τούτους δ' ὑμᾶς δεῖ γενέσθαι. τούς θ' ἡγεμόνας, δι' ὧν ἀνάγκη τὰ πράγματα πράττεσθαι, ὡς εὐνουστάτους ἐπὶ τὰς δυνάμεις ἐφίστατε. See also Menander, Kock F 924: ὡς Ἀλεξανδρώδεις ἤδη τοῦτο· κἂν ζητῶ τινά, αὐτόματος οὕτος παρέσται· κἂν διελθεῖν δηλαδὴ διὰ θαλάττης δέῃ τόπον τιν', οὕτος ἔσται μοι βατός.

The place under *Tychè's* favour was at that time vacant, so Demosthenes and the Athenians could win it only by imitating the Macedonian king, by being daring, enterprising and active. This way of thinking reminds the idea of the succession of world empires, such as Demetrios of Phaleron had formulated it.⁹⁶ Moreover, it seems that there is here a first indication of the *imitatio Alexandri*. In this case, the *imitans* is the Athenian *polis*.⁹⁷ Both painstaking work and boldness were important features of every hero, but according to Athenian political ideology, they were features of the citizens of Athens as well.⁹⁸ The city with its heroic virtue could and should take over the reins from Alexander.

However, *ponoi* (pains und sufferings) as well as invincibility were also essential features of the figure of Heracles.⁹⁹ If one considers Alexander's coins, which probably from 326 BC presented him with Heraclean traits, then such an association would have been conceivable for the Athenian audience and Demosthenes' perception of Alexander could also echo this royal iconography.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, in our view there is something more in Alexander's imitation of Heracles, which is related to the re-interpretation of Heracles' image during the 4th c. BC. Namely, Heracles became gradually not only physically but also intellectually a role model. Philosophers and thinkers, especially the Cynics, conceived his *ponoi* as a metaphor for moral achievements and this led to his re-configuration as a paradigm of virtue.¹⁰¹ It is just about the same time

96 Polyb. 29, 21.

97 Cf. Pap. Oxyr. 216, l. 2–3: καὶ τοῦ τὸ περιμάχη|τον οἷχεται φρόνημα τῆς ἡγεμονίας; On Athens as Alexander's successor: Plut. *Alex.* 13, 2: ἀλλὰ καὶ προσέχειν ἐκέλευσε τοῖς πράγμασι τὸν νοῦν τὴν πόλιν, ὡς εἴ τι συμβαίῃ περὶ αὐτὸν, ἄρξουσιν τῆς Ἑλλάδος.

98 See e.g. Xen. *Oecon.* 1, 19.

99 See Anaxarchos' ideas in Arr. *Anab.* 10, 5–11 [= F 25 B Dorandi]. See further N. Loraux, "Héraklès, le *ponos* et la catégorie de l'héroïque", in *Les expériences de Tirésias* (Paris: 1989), 66–72. On Alexander's *ponoi*: Plut. *Alex.* 38, 3; 40, 2; Arr. *Anab.* 5, 25–27; 7, 9.

100 On Heracles and Alexander see Ephippus *ap.* Athen., XII 537e [*FGrHist* 126 F 5] and Edmunds, *Religiosity*, 374–375; P. Goukowsky, *Essai sur les origines du mythes d'Alexandre* II (Nancy: 1981), 36–41; O. Palagia, "Imitation of Herakles in Ruler Portraiture. A Survey from Alexander to Maximinus Daza", *Boreas* 9 (1986), 140; U. Huttner, *Die politische Rolle der Heraklesgestalt im griechischen Herrschertum* (Stuttgart: 1997), 86–123; Heckel, *Achilles*; on Herakles on the Macedonian coins: S. Kremydi, "Coinage and Finance", in *Brill's Companion to Ancient Macedon*, ed. R. Lane Fox (Leiden and Boston: 2011), 163–164. For M.J. Price, *The Coinage in the Name of Alexander the Great* (Zurich: 1991), Alexander's coinage had Heraclean traits already before 326 BC.

101 See Diog. Laert., VI, 71; see also K. Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme* (Oxford: 1974), 101–125; Loraux, *Héraklès*, 58, n. 23; H. Schulze, "Der Tugendheld—Herakles und die Philosophen",

that Onesicritus, a companion of Alexander and a Cynic philosopher as well, presented the king as a “philosopher in arms”.¹⁰² We think that this is a step further in the idealization of Alexander, which seems to begin right after his death. It is exactly this idealization that is foreshadowed in Demosthenes’ letter.¹⁰³

Conclusions

The speeches of the Attic orators reflect Alexander’s image as seen by a Greek *polis* and seem to influence later perceptions of the Macedonian king.¹⁰⁴ Their testimonies illuminate some aspects of the private and public life of the Macedonian king, yet their greatest concern does not apply to the individual Alexander, but to the stylization of the figure of leader and conqueror as an archetype. This is sought by the antithetical and hyperbolic figures of rhetoric and is shaped by the contradictions of the Athenian politics.

in *Herakles-Herkules*, ed. R. Wünsche (Munich: 2003), 366–379; B. Effe, “Heroische Größe. Der Funktionswandel des Herakles-Mythos in der griechisch-römischen Literatur”, in *Herakles / Herkules 1*, ed. R. Kray and F. Oettermann (Frankfurt am Main: 1994), 15–24; E. Stafford, *Heracles* (New York: 2012), 117–129. For J.J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge: 1986), 85, Lysippus’ Heracles Epitrapezios takes into account this aspect of Heracles.

102 Strab. 15, 1, 65 [*FGrHist* 134 F 17a]. We have to consider here that Platon in his ideal state had already conceived a philosopher with military *paideia* and that under Lycurgus Athens revised the military training of the young men, the *ephebes*. The revival of the hoplitic ideal and the new Hoplite in philosophical garb is the paradigm of the perfect man in the 4th century BC: see Vidal-Naquet, *Chasseur*, 152–153; O. Murray, “Polis and Politeia in Aristotle”, in *The Ancient Greek City-State*, ed. M. Hansen (Copenhagen: 1993), 197–210; N. Loraux, “Socrate, Platon, Héraklès (Sur un paradigme héroïque du philosophe)”, in *Les expériences de Tirésias* (Paris: 1989), 184–193; P. Zanker, *Die Maske des Sokrates. Das Bild des Intellektuellen in der antiken Kunst* (Munich: 1995), 46–90. See further M. Schofield, *Saving the City: Philosopher-Kings and other Classical Paradigms* (London: 1999).

103 The first time that Alexander is described as *philosophos* is by Isocrates, *Epist.* 5, 2 addressed to the young Alexander. The authorship and date of this letter is contested; the term *philosophos* should be understood within Isocrates’s educational practice and political thought and this letter should be inscribed in the antagonism between Isocrates and the Academy, i.e. between rhetoric and philosophy, regarding the education of the political and social elite of the Greek world: Koulakiotis, *Alexandermythos*, 67–72.

104 Especially if we take into consideration the influence of rhetoric on the historiography: W. Will, “Die griechische Geschichtsschreibung des vierten Jahrhunderts. Eine Zusammenfassung”, in *Geschichtsbild und Geschichtsdenken im Altertum*, ed. J.M. Alonso-Nunez (Darmstadt: 1991), 113–135.

For a fraction of the democratic and hegemonic city, like Demosthenes, Alexander represents a threat to its entire cosmos, because he subverts traditional political and social structures and values: an *eromenos* who assumes the role of *erastès* and thus puts in question an important educational model; a warrior who fights not as a hoplite but as a deceptive, young ephebe; a king who behaves like a page; and finally, not as a royal individual but a bestial tyrant, i.e. the negation of the *polis* citizen, the Other (*eteros*) *par excellence*. Such a person who is not exposed to the fluctuations of *Tychè* and can be even worshipped as a deity, can hardly be a Greek, he must be a barbarian. He embodies a danger not only for the physical existence of the *polis*, but also for its political anthropology, because he personifies not only a new kind of youth,¹⁰⁵ but also a new and dangerous kind of human being.

Quite on the contrary, for the political companions of Aeschines, Alexander combined antithetical categories and as such he represented the positive prototype of a new kind of citizen: the Alexander-*pais* thus becomes the perfect man (*anèr*) and realizes the value-system of the *polis*. Moreover, he accomplishes the hegemonic ambitions of Athens. While a century earlier the destructive longing (*pothos*) of Athens during the Peloponnesian Wars had failed in Sicily, Alexander's constructive desire helped him to triumph in the East.¹⁰⁶ In this way the Macedonian turned out to be the Greeks' avenger against Persian despotism. Even more: he became the divine tool for restoring *Dike* and as such he was the opposite of a barbarian dynast. For Aeschines, in the deeds of Alexander time and space can be redefined, since the young king belongs literally to the realm of the exotic, i.e. out of history. The synthesis of this dialectical confrontation can be found after the death of Alexander. According to the epistolography of that time, the dead king has set his own political and moral paradigm, to be imitated by the future leaders and world rulers.¹⁰⁷

105 Smith, *Kings*; Hölscher, *Herrschaft*, 33–59.

106 Thuc. 6, 24, 3: πόθος ὀψέως καὶ θεωρίας. On Alexander's *pothos* see V. Ehrenberg, "Pothos", in V. Ehrenberg, *Alexander and the Greeks* (Oxford: 1938), 52–61; Davidson, *Love*, 12–13.

107 D. Spencer, *The Roman Alexander* (Exeter: 2002), 205–218; P. Briant, "La tradition gréco-romaine sur Alexandre le Grand dans l'Europe moderne et contemporaine. Quelques réflexions sur la permanence et l'adaptabilité des modèles interprétatifs", in *The Impact of Classical Greece on European and National Identities*, ed. M. Haagsma et al. (Amsterdam: 2003), 161–180; P. Cartledge, *Alexander the Great* (London: 2004), 231–242; A. Demandt, *Alexander der Grosse. Leben und Legende* (Munich: 2009).

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The Reception of Alexander's Father Philip II of Macedon*

Sabine Müller

Philip II turned a disunited, weakened, and peripheral Macedonia into the hegemonic power of the Mediterranean world. Without his political achievements, Alexander III's conquests would not have been possible.¹ In 360/59 BC, when Philip was in his early twenties, he ascended to the Argead throne in the midst of a desolate situation when the Argead Empire was at the edge of collapse, militarily on its knees, threatened by the neighbouring Illyrians, Thracians, and Paeonians and challenged by five pretenders.² During his reign, Philip and his capable generals such as Antipater and Parmenion managed to neutralize both external and internal threats. They reorganized and modernized the army and warfare, stabilized the political structures, subjugated their neighbours, conquered the Macedonian coast and Chalcidice, thereby extinguishing the Athenian influence in these regions, then the Thracian Chersonesos and Hellespontic zone before making their way into Central Greece, strategically using Philip's involvement in inner-Greek conflicts. The Attic orator Demosthenes, the leader and figurehead of the Athenian circles favouring an offensive policy towards the Macedonians, finally united a Hellenic Alliance that failed at the battle of Chaeroneia in 338 BC.³ The victory under Philip's leadership established Macedonian hegemony over Greece. Philip consolidated the

* I would like to thank Kenneth Moore for his kind support.

- 1 Cf. Ian Worthington, "'Worldwide Empire' versus 'Glorious Enterprise': Diodorus and Justin on Philip II and Alexander the Great", in *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*, edited by Elizabeth D. Carney and Daniel Ogden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 165; Sabine Müller, "Philip II", in *Blackwell Companion to Ancient Macedonia*, edited by Joseph Roisman, and Ian Worthington (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 166, 183–184; Ian Worthington, *Philip II of Macedon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1; Waldemar Heckel, *Who's Who in the Age of Alexander the Great* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 208–211; Giuseppe Squillace, *Filippo il Macedone* (Roma, Bari: Editori Laterza, 2009), 77–78.
- 2 One of these pretenders, Argaeus, was supported by Athens. Obviously, he had promised to help her to win back Amphipolis (Diod. 16.2.5. 3.3–5).
- 3 Diod. 16.84.3–86.6; Plut. *Demosth.* 17.4–5; Plut. *Alex.* 9.2–3; Just. 9.3.4–10; Polyain. 4.2.2, 2.7. Cf. Sabine Müller, *Die Argeaden. Geschichte Makedoniens bis zum Zeitalter Alexanders des*

conquest through the political instrument of the Corinthian League tying the Greeks into a new order, styled as a common peace (*koine eirene*) controlled by a *synedrion* of which Philip was elected *hegemon*. At the second meeting in 337 BC, war against the Achaemenid Empire of Persia was declared.⁴ The underlying Panhellenic message was nothing more than propaganda. In truth, the campaign was a continuation of the Macedonian expansion in the East that had been stopped in 341/40 BC by the intervention of the Achaemenid king Artaxerxes III. When Philip's troops besieged Perinthus and Byzantium, the alarmed Great King ordered his satraps on the coast of Asia Minor to interfere and the Macedonians drew back.⁵ Artaxerxes' reaction was a clear sign that any further Argead expansion in the Hellespontic area would meet Achaemenid military resistance. In consequence, the former times of the peaceful accommodation between Macedonia and Persia had ended.⁶

Presumably, Philip had planned to limit his Asian campaign to the conquest of the Ionian cities and resourceful satrapies on the coast of Asia Minor.⁷ However, the task fell to his successor, Alexander. For in the autumn of 336 BC, in the 25th year of his reign, Philip was assassinated. He died in the theatre of Aegae before the eyes of a crowd assembled to celebrate the marriage of his daughter by Olympias, Cleopatra, Alexander's full sister, to her uncle Alexander I of Epirus.⁸ The marital bond was meant to strengthen young Alexander's political faction at court in order to improve his chances of succeeding Philip in a future that was surely expected to be not that near.⁹ The assassin, Philip's bodyguard

Großen (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2016), 264–267; Müller, "Philip", 176–178; Squillace, *Filippo*, 64–70; Worthington, *Philip*, 147–151; Heckel, *Who*, 210.

4 Just. 9.5.1–7; Diod. 16.77.2, 89; StV 3.403.

5 Diod. 16.75.1–2; Arr. *an.* 2.14.5. Cf. Müller, *Argeaden*, 264, 267–269; Pierre Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse de Cyrus à Alexandre* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), 707–709.

6 On the close connections between Persia and Macedonia before see Marek Jan Olbrycht, "Macedonia and Persia", in *Blackwell Companion to Ancient Macedonia*, edited by Joseph Roisman, and Ian Worthington (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 342–369.

7 Cf. Müller, *Argeaden*, 267–268; Müller, "Philip", 178–179; Squillace, *Filippo*, 70–77; Worthington, *Philip*, 170; Gerhard Wirth, *Philipp II. Geschichte Makedoniens I* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1985), 148–150.

8 Just. 7.6.3–4; Diod. 16.2.5–3.1. Cf. Müller, *Argeaden*, 236–239; Squillace, *Filippo*, 10–11; Heckel, *Who*, 210.

9 Despite the retrospective rumours about his assumedly tensed relationship with Alexander, Philip never seems to have intended to marginalize or even disinherit his militarily and politically educated son. Cf. Müller, *Argeaden*, 269–270; Selene E. Psoma, "Innovation or Tradition? Succession to the Kingship in Temenid Macedonia", *Τεχμήρια II* (2012): 78; Gerhard Wirth, "Alexander, Kassander und andere Zeitgenossen", *Tyche* 4 (1989): 193–220. Alexander was distinguished from early on as the would-be successor and seems to have been Philip's choice for his succession until the end.

Pausanias from Orestis, one of the regions of Upper Macedonia that Philip had deprived of their former autonomy, was killed on the spot.¹⁰ As Pausanias' motivation remained an enigma, Philip's assassination became one of the most famous unsolved criminal cases in antiquity that triggered several theories.¹¹ Either Pausanias was suspected to have acted on his own committing a personal crime as suggested by Aristotle,¹² or he had been hired by one of the Persians,¹³ Olympias, with or without Alexander's connivance,¹⁴ or, as according to the official version circulated in Macedonia by the new regime, the three sons of Aëropus from Upper Macedonian Lyncestis (in the neighbourhood of Pausanias' homeland Orestis).¹⁵ Layers of contemporary speculation and courtly propaganda, literary conventions and later interpolation have overshadowed the ancient reports on the crime. However, it will have been a product of the political structures, factions and constellations of the era, located within a political setting.¹⁶

10 Diod. 16.94.4; cf. P.Oxy. 1798 (= *FGrH* 148). Cf. Heckel, *Who*, 193–194.

11 Cf. E.I. McQueen, *Diodorus Siculus: The Reign of Philip II* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1995), 189–197.

12 Aristot. *Pol.* 1311 B; Diod. 16.93.1–94.1.

13 Arr. *An.* 2.14.5; Curt. 4.1.12. This seems to have been a later tradition.

14 Plut. *Alex.* 9.4–6; Athen. 13.557 D–E; Just. 9.7.3–10. This is improbable as Alexander's position was that insecure at the time of his father's death that it nearly cost him the throne. He owed his accession primarily to Antipater's support and Parmenion's agreement. Perhaps they had even joined his side unexpectedly as they could not agree on an alternative candidate such as Amyntas, son of Perdiccas III, or Alexander, son of Aëropus (Antipater's son-in-law). In addition, it has to be considered that the story of the estrangement between Philip, Olympias and Alexander was shaped in retrospective in order to explain the assassination. See Adrian Tronson, "Satyrus the Peripathetic and the Marriages of Philip II", *JHS* 104 (1984): 116–126. By the time of Philip's death, he had publicly reconciled with his son and Olympias (Plut. *Mor.* 179 C).

15 Just. 11.2; Curt. 7.1.6–7; Arr. *An.* 1.25.1–2; Plut. *Mor.* 327 C. A. Brian Bosworth, "Philip II and Upper Macedonia", *CQ* 21 (1971): 102 assumed that the Upper Macedonian nobility felt marginalized by Philip's last marriage to a member of the Lower Macedonian nobility and wanted to murder him to prevent Macedonia from being ruled by a "junta from the lower plain". However, there seems to have been no fundamental separation between Upper and Lower Macedonian nobles at Philip's court: The factions were mixed. In any case, while conflicts between the political courtly factions will have led to Philip's assassination, the resistance of some Upper Macedonian nobles against the Argead control under Philip may also have played a role. Even more, as the three sons of Aëropus might have been members of another branch of the Argeads and thus had rights to the throne. Additionally, they might have not forgotten that Philip exiled their father (Polyaen. 4.2.3). Cf. Worthington, *Philip*, 87.

16 See Waldemar Heckel, Tim Howe, and Sabine Müller, "The Giver of the Bride, the Bride-

Already in his lifetime, Philip was a celebrity. The new dimension of the empire's rise and expansion under his reign vaulted him into the public eye. As the political success of Macedonia, with its perceived personal monarchy, was associated primarily with Philip and ascribed to him individually; he was viewed as a new kind of enemy in regard of timing, weapons, tactics and rapid successes.¹⁷ Philip was clearly the man of the hour. Thus, he formed part of the contemporary political discourses as well as gossip in the Mediterranean world. This is particularly attested by the speeches of the Attic orators, associated with the climax and 'golden age' of Greek oratory. As they reflect contemporary Athenian struggles for the *polis'* political direction towards the rising Argead Empire, Philip played a pivotal role. More especially, Demosthenes became famous for his efforts to mobilize Athenian military resistance against Macedonian expansion.¹⁸ In his speeches, he tried to alarm and encourage his fellow citizens by appealing to their fighting spirit convincing them that Philip was not an invincible enemy. Demosthenes depicted the Macedonian ruler as a notorious fraud, robber and liar who led a lewd life at the den of vice that was his court and owed his successes only to the inactivity and negligence of the Athenians.¹⁹ Demosthenes was among the Athenian ambassadors who had negotiated the Peace of Philocrates with Philip (346 BC) ending the war over Amphipolis which had been declared in 357 BC by Athens. However, when the terms of peace became unpopular with the Athenians as the Macedonian successes quickly undermined it, Demosthenes distanced himself from the settlement and placed the blame on his fellow ambassadors, such as Aeschines, whom he accused of being Philip's agent.²⁰ Against this background of inner-Athenian conflicts, Demosthenes portrayed Philip as an unscrupulous master of bribery effectively using the weaknesses of his opponents by putting all the corrupt politicians in Greece on his payroll, thus undermining the Greek defence and

groom and the Bride' (Plu. *Alex.* 10.4): A Study of the Death of Philip II and Its Aftermath", in *Ancient Historiography on War and Empire*, edited by Tim Howe, Sabine Müller, and Richard Stoneman (Cambridge: Oxbow, 2017), 92–124.

17 Cf. Stephen Usher, "Symboleutic Oratory", in *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, edited by Ian Worthington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 233; Wirth, *Philipp*, 40.

18 See Müller, *Argeaden*, 255–256; Worthington, *Philip*, 3, 50–251; Iris Samotta, *Demosthenes* (Tübingen: UTB, 2010), 27–87; Müller, "Philip", 168, 173–175; Gustav Adolf Lehmann, *Demosthenes von Athen. Ein Leben für die Freiheit* (Munich: Beck, 2004), 65–180.

19 Most significant: Dem. 2.7, 18–19.

20 Dem. 18,61; 19.135–136. 300–301. 320–321. Cf. Usher, "Symboleutic Oratory", 233; Squillace, *Filippo*, 52; Joseph Roisman, *The Rhetoric of Conspiracy in Athens* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2006), 118–119, 126.

preparing his enslavement of Greece. It is important to note that Demosthenes' image of Philip is inextricably linked with Demosthenes' own position and agenda within the Athenian political structures. Therefore, it first of all mirrors inner-Athenian conflicts and Demosthenes' strategies against his inner-Athenian rivals. In his *Nachleben*, Demosthenes was inevitably linked with Philip, remembered as his greatest Athenian antagonist. For example, in the imperial era, Dio Chrysostomus depicts a dialogue between Philip and Alexander in which Philip voices his admiration for Demosthenes' art of speech, stating that he would have given Amphipolis for him.²¹ As for the punchline, as mentioned before, the former Athenian *apoikia* of Amphipolis founded in 437/36 BC but lost already in 424/3 BC, was taken by Philip in 357 BC.²² This was the reason why the Athenians declared the war on Macedonia that was ended by the Peace of Philocrates. Although Amphipolis quickly became out of reach for Athens after 357 BC, it was still evoked by the Attic orators as a symbol of collective Athenian identity.²³ The question of Amphipolis and the rightfulness of Philip's conquest of the *polis* even served as an argument in the rivalry between the Platonic Academy and Isocrates and his school, given that the *Letter to Philip* by Speusippus, Plato's nephew and successor as the head of the Academy, attacking Isocrates' *Philippus* is in fact genuine.²⁴

Philip was also present as a character on the Attic stage. Probably a short time after the Peace of Philocrates, the comic poet Mnesimachus composed a play called the *Philippus*. Apparently, Philip II was the target of it, while a fictionalized Demosthenes might also have appeared on stage as well, in a scene depicting a banquet in Macedonia.²⁵ Unfortunately, too little survives of the

21 Dio Chrys. *Or.* 2.19.

22 Foundation: Thuc. 1.100.3; 4.102.3, 108.1; Diod. 12.32.3, 68.2; Polyæn. 6.53; Loss: Thuc. 4.103.3, 107.3; Macedonian Conquest: Aeschin. 2.70; Diod. 16.8.2–3; Dem. 5.14; Polyæn. 4.2.17. Cf. Wirth, *Philip*, 36.

23 Cf. Sabine Müller, "Historische Rückprojektionen: Amphipolis, Athen, Philipp II. und seine *progonoi*", *Anabasis* 7 (2017) 19–41.

24 Speus. *Phil.* 5–8. Cf. Kenneth Moore, "Of Philosophers and Kings: Concerning Philip II of Macedon's Alleged 'Debt' to Plato", *Anabasis* 7 (2017) (forthcoming); Worthington, *Philip*, 121–122; Anthony Francis Natoli, *The Letter of Speusippus to Philip II. Introduction, Text, Translation and Commentary* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2004), 77–84; Giuseppe Squillace, *Βασιλεὺς ἢ τύραννος. Filippo II e Alessandro Magno tra opposizione e consenso* (Catanzaro: Rubbettino, 2004), 34–36. The letter is usually dated in about 343/2 BC. On the rivalry: Athen. 2.60 D–E; 4.122 B; Cic. *De orat.* 3.141.

25 Cf. Jeffrey Henderson, "Comedy in the Fourth Century II: Politics and Domesticity", in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Comedy*, edited by Michael Fontaine, and Adele C. Scafuro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 187; Athina Papachrysostomou, *Six*

play to be certain about its content. However, in fragment 7, obviously making fun of the image of the Macedonians as particularly warlike, a speaker of the stock type of the *miles gloriosus* boasts of the (presumably Macedonian) belligerence and enthusiasm for weapons. According to him, they were so bellicose that they would literally swallow weapons:

Don't you know that you have got to fight against us men who dine on swords freshly sharpened, and who, instead of an entrée, eat up lighted torches? Immediately after that the slave, after dinner, brings on a dessert in the form of Cretan arrows instead of chickpeas, broken remnants of javelins besides; and we have shields and breastplates for cushions, slings and bows ready at our feet, and wreath ourselves with catapults.²⁶

Significantly, these 'local specialities' are of the most dangerous kind: freshly sharpened swords and Cretan arrow heads, famous for their sharpness.²⁷ The catapults as headdresses are supposed to refer to the Macedonian innovations regarding siege warfare under Philip.²⁸ Partly, it is suggested that the boastful monologue about the militaristic form of dining was ascribed to the role of Philip II himself who spoke to the Athenian ambassadors at Pella trying to intimidate them.²⁹ The fragment is an allusive hint at what was expected to make the Athenian audience laugh. As the comic genre demands, Mnesimachus' image of Philip's Macedonians as uncouth, rumbling, bellicose big-

Comic Poets. A Commentary on Selected Fragments of Middle Comedy (Tübingen: Narr, 2008), 210, 214; John Wilkins, *The Boastful Chef: The Discourse of Food in Ancient Greek Comedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 282. Presumably, it was about one of the Athenian embassies to Pella sent to negotiate the Peace of Philocrates in 346 BC.

26 Athen 10.421 C: ἀρ' οἶσθα σὺ ὅτι πρὸς ἄνδρας ἐστὶ σοι μαχητέον οἱ τὰ ξίφη δειπνοῦμεν ἡκονημένα, ὃ ὅσον δὲ δᾶδας ἡμμένας καταπίνομεν; ἐντεῦθεν εὐθὺς ἐπιφέρει τραγήματα ἡμῖν ὁ παῖς μετὰ δειπνον ἀκίδας Κρητικάς, ὥσπερ ἐρεβίνθους, δορατίων τε λείψανα κατεαγόντ', ἀσπίδας δὲ προσκεφάλαια καὶ καὶ θώρακας ἔχομεν, πρὸς ποδῶν δὲ σφενδόνας τόξα, καταπέλταισι δ' ἐστεφανώμεθα. Trans. C.B. Gulick. Cf. Eoghan Moloney, "Philippus in acie tutior quam in theatro fuit" (Curt. 9.6.25). The Macedonian Kings and Greek Theatre", in *Greek Theatre in the Fourth Century BC*, eds. Eric Csapo et al. (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 2014), 242–243; Papachrysostomou, *Comic Poets*, 210, 214; Philip Sabin, "Battle", in *The Cambridge History of Ancient Greek and Roman Warfare*. Vol. 1, edited by Philip Sabin, Hans van Wees, and Michael Whitby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 451.

27 Cf. Papachrysostomou, *Comic Poets*, 211–215. On Cretan arrows see Plut. *Pyrrh.* 29.4; Poll. 1.149.

28 Cf. Sabin, "Battle", 451–452. See Polyæn. 4.2.20.

29 Cf. Moloney, "Philippus", 201, 243.

mouths is exaggerated. However, it will have been based upon contemporary Athenian perceptions of Macedonia under Philip's rule.

The successes of Philip's reign were also reflected in the historiography. Unfortunately, the contemporary accounts are lost. Theopompus of Chius spent some time at Philip's court and wrote a history of that monarch's career, called the *Philippika*, in 58 books according to Diodorus, from Philip's accession to his death.³⁰ From an obviously moralistic and pessimistic perspective, through "an incredibly bitter account",³¹ Theopompus wrote his history as one of moral and political decline. To the general contemporary loss of morals, he attributed the rise of Philip, depicted as a libertine, gangster and tyrant surrounded by dissolute scoundrels, hence a politician of the worst kind.³² In a mood of cultural pessimism, Theopompus seems to have explained Philip's successes through his lack of integrity:³³ "Far from being his hero, he is the symbol of what seems to him wrong with the age (...) Philip is the (...) engine of corruption, that draws evil to itself and destroys whatever good he finds".³⁴ Again, comparable to the case of the speeches of the Attic Orators, Philip is an indicator of the perceived, morally weak condition of the Greek *poleis* and their politicians whose corrupt state was exploited by Philip.³⁵

The contemporary philosopher Anaximenes of Lampsacus also wrote a *Philippika* that is now lost.³⁶ While the tradition that he was one of the teachers of Alexander has to be viewed with caution,³⁷ however, Anaximenes' association with Philip's court will have led to a favourable portrayal of the Macedonian ruler.³⁸ Another insider was Marsyas of Pella, a half-brother of Antigonus

30 Diod. 16.3.8. Cf. Frances Pownall, *Lessons from the Past: The Moral Use of History in Fourth Century Prose* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 144. On his life see Gordon Shrimpton, *Theopompus the Historian* (Montreal et al.: Queen's University Press, 1991), 3–5; I.A.F. Bruce, "Theopompus and Classical Greek Historiography", *History and Theory* 9 (1970): 87.

31 Shrimpton, *Theopompus*, 6.

32 F.e. FGrH 115 F 27. Cf. Shrimpton, *Theopompus*, 123.

33 Cf. Pownall, *Lessons*, 149–175; Shrimpton, *Theopompus*, 127–180; Gordon Shrimpton, "Theopompus' Treatment of Philip in the *Philippika*", *Phoenix* 31 (1977): 123–144; W. Robert Connor, "History without Heroes: Theopompus' Treatment of Philip of Macedon", *GRBS* 8 (1957): 147, 151.

34 Connor, "History", 146. Cf. Wirth, *Philipp*, 171–172.

35 Cf. Shrimpton, *Theopompus*, 180.

36 Diod. 15.89.3; Diog. Laert. 2.3. Cf. Heckel, *Who*, 27; Lionel Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (New York: American Philological Society 1960), 243–245.

37 Cf. Heckel, *Who*, 27.

38 Cf. Jörg Fündling, *Philipp II. von Makedonien* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2014), 174.

Monophthalmus,³⁹ who reportedly grew up at Philip's court and was educated together with Alexander.⁴⁰ Probably at Antigonus' satrapal court in Phrygia, Marsyas wrote a lost *Makedonika* that will have been dedicated to a significant part to Philip's reign, surely in a favourable way.⁴¹

Especially in Macedonia in the time of the Successors, the glorified memory of Philip became a certain *lieu de mémoire*. Transformed into the idealized counter-image of his son by the Macedonian critics of Alexander's autocratic regal style and Persian policy, a legend of Philip as the 'true' Macedonian ruler, perceived as an accessible, jovial *primus inter pares*, developed in Macedonian circles.⁴² While this idealized image of Philip was not really in accordance with the historical person who had prepared the way for Alexander to transform the royal style still further, it was used as a weapon in the rivalries over Alexander's legacy, especially by Cassander. In the first phase of his political struggle, he tried to legitimize his establishment of control over Macedonia by pretending to walk into the footsteps of Philip as the engineer of Macedonian power in the Aegean.⁴³ Therefore, Cassander styled himself as Philip's 'real' heir who lived down the interlude of Alexander and, (allegedly) in contrast to Alexander, respected the Macedonian *nomoi*.⁴⁴ Notably, Cassander forced Philip's daughter Thessalonice, not a full-sister of Alexander, to marry him and ignored the

39 Plut. *mor.* 182 c. Cf. Miltiades B. Hatzopoulos, "Macedonians and Other Greeks", in *Brill's Companion to Ancient Macedon*, edited by Robin Lane Fox (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 65; Heckel, *Who*, 156; Elizabeth Baynham, "The Ancient Evidence for Alexander the Great", in *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great*, edited by Joseph Roisman (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 7.

40 Suda s.v. *Marsyas Periandrou Pellaïos*. Cf. Waldemar Heckel, "Marsyas of Pella, Historian of Macedon", *Hermes* 108 (1980): 444–462.

41 Cf. Worthington, *Philip*, 211; Heckel, *Who*, 156, 211; Heckel, "Marsyas", 447.

42 Cf. Sabine Müller, "In the Shadow of his Father: Alexander, Hermolaus, and the Legend of Philip", in *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*, edited by Elizabeth D. Carney, and Daniel Ogden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 31–32.

43 Cf. Franca Landucci Gattinoni, "Cassander and the Legacy of Philip II and Alexander III", in *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*, edited by Elizabeth D. Carney, and Daniel Ogden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 113–114, 116, 121. See also Franca Landucci Gattinoni, *L'arte del potere. Vita e opere di Cassandro di Macedonia* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2003), 80–82; Franca Landucci Gattinoni, "Cassander's Wife and Heirs", in *Alexander & His Successors. Essays from the Antipodes*, edited by Pat Wheatley and Robert Hannah (Claremont: Regina Books, 2009), 262–265.

44 Cf. Gerhard Wirth, *Der Weg in die Vergessenheit. Zum Schicksal des antiken Alexanderbildes* (Wien: ÖAW, 1993), 10–11; Gerhard Wirth, "Alexander in der 2. Generation", in *Purposes of History*, edited by Herman Verdin, Guido Schepens, and Els de Keyser (Leuven: Peeters, 1990), 206–210.

tradition to name the first son after his paternal grandfather (Antipater) by naming his and Thessalonice's first male offspring Philip.⁴⁵

However as time passed, and although Philip had “made himself the greatest of the kings in Europe in his time”, as Diodorus comments,⁴⁶ due to the Macedonian conquest of Asia under Alexander, the latter became the most famous Argead and a household name overshadowing Philip's fame. In consequence, Philip was particularly remembered as Alexander's father, while the memory of his own achievements began to fade. Predominantly, he became a mere foil to Alexander's superior image as a conqueror. Even the natural hierarchy of father over son was reversed. Philip's contribution to his son's famous deeds was mostly acknowledged in passing.⁴⁷ The judgment of the late Augustan writer Pompeius Trogus in his *Historiae Philippicae*, which, despite its title, was a universal history about the rise and fall of empires from the ancient Near East to the perceived teleological completion of world history, namely Augustan Rome,⁴⁸ may have been an exception to the rule. Trogus' model was Theopompus' *Philippika*, from which he may have taken the title,⁴⁹ being “reminiscent of the caustic moralizing typified by Theopompus”.⁵⁰ While Theopompus focused

45 Diod. 19.52.1. Cf. Landucci Gattinoni, “Cassander”, 114.

46 Diod. 16.95.1. Cf. Worthington, “Worldwide Empire”, 173; Squillace, *Filippo*, 77–78.

47 Cf. Sulochana Asirvatham, “His Son's Father? Philip II in the Second Sophistic”, in *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*, edited by Elizabeth D. Carney, and Daniel Ogden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 195; Worthington, “Worldwide Empire”, 165; Wirth, *Philipp*, 169. See also Fündling, *Philipp*, 173–174. In the Roman tradition, Alexander even is guilty of annihilation of filial *pietas* by his alleged attempt to provide himself with a divine father, see Diana Spencer, “You should never meet your heroes ...” Growing Up with Alexander the Great, the Valerius Maximus Way”, in *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*, edited by Elizabeth D. Carney, and Daniel Ogden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 184–185. However, as she points out, to the Roman recipient, Philip was no staunch *pater familias*.

48 Cf. Bernard van Wickevoort Crommelin, *Die Universalgeschichte des Pompeius Trogus, Herculeae audacia orbem terrarum adgressus* (Dortmund and Hagen: MRM, 1993), 36–94; Leonhard Schumacher, “Die Herrschaft der Makedonen im Kanon der ‘Weltreich’-Abfolge des Pompeius Trogus (Justin): Grundlage, Gestaltung, Zielsetzung”, *ZPE* 131 (2000): 284–285. Only the epitomized version by Justin has come down to us. The dimension of Justin's own contribution to the text is a matter of debate.

49 Cf. David S. Levene, “Roman Historiography in the Late Republic”, in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*. Vol. 1, edited by John Marincola (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 287; Johannes Engels, *Augusteische Oikumenegeographie und Universalhistorie im Werk Strabons von Amaseia* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999), 246.

50 John C. Yardley, and R. Develin, *Justin: Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 6.

on the history of Philip's career, Trogus expanded the moral approach to ascribe the rise and fall of a series of great empires to the degree of moderation or corruption of the respective ruler.⁵¹ Trogus depicts Philip as a reckless, immoral and extortive tyrant lacking *moderatio*.⁵² In accordance with his scheme of moral decay, however, Alexander is characterized as even worse, thus the worst Argead ruler ever.⁵³ In consequence, Philip was thereby elevated over Alexander.⁵⁴

Predominantly, Philip played a minor role as a supporter of Alexander's 'greatness' in their ancient literary afterlife, thus one of his 'stepping stones'. Hence, in Second Sophistic literature, Philip is often styled as a "part of an outdated past",⁵⁵ subordinated to Alexander and diminished for the latter's benefit.⁵⁶ One of the exponents of the Second Sophistic, the Syrian satirist Lucian of Samosata (2nd century AD) makes light of these current Greco-Roman images of Philip and Alexander, depicting a posthumous conversation between them in the underworld in his *Dialogues of the Dead*.⁵⁷ In contrast to the well-known image of Alexander's superiority to Philip, Lucian revokes the usual reversal of the hierarchy of father over son by restoring Philip's authority over Alexander. Philip is the dominant character. Far from being the supporting act of Alexander the famous conqueror, Lucian's Philip waits for his son to arrive in the underworld to reverse their roles and to give him a severe telling-off. Like a father scolding his naughty child, Philip reproaches Alexander, voicing the traditional accusations against him such as being a megalomaniac tyrant, killing his friends, priding himself on his victories over weak and effeminate enemies, riding roughshod over Macedonian *nomoi* and calling himself the son of Ammon. Firmly, Philip points at the superiority of his own deeds as compared to his son's achievements:

What enemies did you conquer that were worth fighting? Your adversaries were always cowards, and armed with nothing better than bows and bucklers and wicker shields. But conquering Greeks, conquering Boeotians,

51 Cf. Brett Bartlett, "Justin's Epitome. The Unlikely Adaption of Trogus' World History", *Histos* 8 (2014): 256, 279.

52 F.e. Just. 8.6.4–6; 9.8.4–6.

53 Cf. Bartlett, "Justin's Epitome", 256; Sabine Müller, *Alexander, Makedonien und Persien* (Berlin: trafo, 2014), 121–124; van Wickevoort Crommelin, *Universalgeschichte*, 59–62.

54 Cf. Worthington, "'Worldwide Empire'", 166.

55 Asirvatham, "Father", 196.

56 Cf. Asirvatham, "Father", 196–197, 201.

57 Luk. *DM* 14.

Phocians and Athenians was a real task, and subduing Arcadian heavy troops, Thessalian horse, javelin men of Elis, and light troops of Mantinea, or Thracians, Illyrians or Paeonians was a great achievement. But as for Medes, Persians, and Chaldaeans, effeminate creatures bedecked in gold ...⁵⁸

Due to Philip's forceful and fierce appearance, Lucian's Alexander is compelled to accept his father's dominance and his own subordination to Philip. Thereby, the great conqueror is turned into a meek, disturbed youngster trying in vain to defend himself, obviously yearning for his father's approval. But Philip finishes his 'curtain-lecture' by reprimanding his son like a small child who ought to be ashamed of himself.⁵⁹

Another cornerstone regarding Philip's reception was the denial of his biological paternity of Alexander in the *Greek Alexander Romance*. It was written in late antique (third-century) Egypt, most probably Alexandria, by an anonymous author who owes the name Pseudo-Callisthenes to an erroneous identification with Alexander's court historiographer Callisthenes in a manuscript.⁶⁰ The *Greek Alexander Romance* is a colourful, mostly fictitious, adventure story, a complex mixture of traditions from different times and cultures combining various literary genres such as biography, *periplus*, romance, historiography, epistle, epic and novel genres.⁶¹ Except for Egypt as a topographically key symbol, the Achaemenid Empire serves mainly as a setting for the adventures of Alexander as a travelling conqueror and explorer checking out limits in search of marvels and challenging human boundaries, having to experience severe setbacks in order to become wise and duly chastened.⁶² Portraying Alex-

58 Luk. *DM* 14.2: τίνων δὲ ἐκράτησας σύ γε ἀξιωμαίων ἀνδρῶν, ὃς δειλοῖς αἰεὶ ξυνηνέχθης τοξάρια καὶ πελτάρια καὶ γέρρα οἰσύνῃα προβεβλημένοις; Ἑλλήνων κρατεῖν ἔργον ἦν, Βοιωτῶν καὶ Φωκέων καὶ Ἀθηναίων, καὶ τὸ Ἀρκάδων ὀπλιτικὸν καὶ τὴν Θετταλὴν ἵππον καὶ τοὺς Ἥλείων ἀκοντιστάς καὶ τὸ Μαντινέων πελταστικὸν ἢ Θρᾷκας ἢ Ἰλλυριοὺς ἢ καὶ Παίονας χειρώσασθαι, ταῦτα μέγала: Μῆδων δὲ καὶ Περσῶν καὶ Χαλδαίων, χρυσοφόρων ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἄβρων ... Trans. M.D. Macleod.

59 Cf. Sabine Müller, "Trügerische Bilder? Lukians Umgang mit Tyrannen- und Orienttopoi in seinen Hadesszene", *Gymnasium* 120 (2013): 182–184; Müller, "Shadow", 24.

60 Richard Stoneman, *Alexander the Great. A Life in Legend* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 150; Minoo S. Southgate, *Iskandarnamah* (New York: Columbia UP, 1978), 2.

61 Cf. Elias Koulakiotis, *Genese und Metamorphosen des Alexandermythos im Spiegel der griechischen nicht-historiographischen Überlieferung bis zum 3. Jh. n. Chr.* (Konstanz: UVK, 2006), 232.

62 Cf. Stoneman, *Alexander*, 67–90.

ander as a true legitimate pharaoh instead of a foreign usurper, he is presented as the son of the last indigenous pharaoh, Nectanebus II, who fled from the Persian re-conquest of Egypt under Artaxerxes III. While he in fact travelled to Nubia and vanished from the sources,⁶³ in the *Greek Alexander Romance*, he fled to Macedonia. Being an expert magician, he made a living by telling fortunes and came to the court. There he tricked Philip's wife Olympias into believing that, for her own sake, she had to sleep with the god Ammon, and into taking him for the god when he visited her in the disguise of Ammon. Thus, he fathered Alexander.⁶⁴ Despite the rejection of Philip's biological paternity in the *Greek Alexander Romance*, he was not dismissed as a father figure.⁶⁵ While Nectanebus stayed at the court giving Alexander astrological school lessons, Philip raised the child, said to have been of divine origin. His uneasiness about the son who did not resemble him was neutralized when the teenage Alexander accomplished his first heroic deed. He tamed the man-eating horror horse Bucephalus and took him for a ride through Pella, thereby fulfilling the prophecy that only the future ruler of the world would be able to do so. Philip reacted like a proud father and continued to foster Alexander tenderly.⁶⁶ Henceforth, Philip clearly lived up to the role of a royal father taking care of his son and future successor. Even Philip's quarrel with Olympias could not destroy the paternal bond and Alexander conciliated his parents.⁶⁷ When Philip was attacked and mortally wounded by Pausanias, Alexander helped his dying father to take revenge by killing his assassin. By this time, Philip had completely adopted the paternal role. In consequence, he could leave his empire to Alexander as his acknowledged rightful heir.⁶⁸ However, in the *Greek Alexander Romance*, the question of paternity is complex and inconsistent, providing its hero with a multitude of fathers and father figures: Alexander's biological father Nectanebus, his foster-father Philip, the father figure Aristotle and a divine father, the god Ammon, who also acknowledged his paternity of Alexander.⁶⁹ However, despite Alexander's poly-fathered nature,

63 Cf. Stoneman, *Alexander*, 13.

64 Ps.-Call. 1.1.3–5.2. Cf. Daniel Ogden, *Alexander the Great. Myth, Genesis and Sexuality* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2011), 21–22, 26–28; Stoneman, *Alexander*, 13–22; Koulakiotis, *Genese*, 190; Michael Pfrommer, *Alexander der Große. Auf den Spuren eines Mythos* (Mainz: von Zabern, 2001), 31–34.

65 Cf. Koulakiotis, *Genese*, 201, 203–204.

66 Ps.-Call. 1.13.1–3, 17–18.3.

67 Ps.-Call. 1.22.

68 Ps.-Call. 1.24.4–8.

69 The real god Ammon acknowledges Alexander as his son: Ps.-Call. 1.30.2–7.

Philip is indispensable because his legacy was the starting point of Alexander's position, campaigns and adventures. It was thus a question of legitimacy. Therefore, in the *Greek Alexander Romance*, Alexander still called himself 'son of Philip' when he already knew about Nectanebus' and additionally Ammon's acknowledged paternity.⁷⁰

The *Greek Alexander Romance*, in its various recensions, essentially influenced the Western and Eastern Medieval reception of Philip. In consequence, the question of Alexander's lineage and Philip's paternity remained a matter of controversy and produced its own interpretations. In the Eastern traditions on Alexander, there is disagreement about his descent. One variant says that he was an exposed child saved by Philip, while according to another one, labelled 'the Persian',⁷¹ he was the product of a brief marriage between king Darab and Ficus' (Philip's) daughter Nahid. Hence, Philip was made Alexander's maternal grandfather and Alexander transformed into the half-brother of his Persian opponent Darab (Darius III).⁷² In his famous *Iskandarnamēh* (late 12th century), in which Iskandar (Alexander) receives a favourable treatment as a superior warrior king developing into a sage, the Persian poet Nizami rejects these variants as lies, firmly asserting Philip's paternity.⁷³

There are similar phenomena in the Medieval, Western reception of Alexander and Philip.⁷⁴ Alexander's descent was a crucial point associated with genealogical legitimacy, rightful heritage and right to rule. In consequence the sus-

70 Ps-Call. 1.35.4, 37.2.

71 Faustina Doufika-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus. A Survey of Alexander Traditions through Seven Centuries: From Pseudo-Callisthenes to Sūrī* (Paris and Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 19.

72 Cf. Stoneman, *Alexander*, 26; Southgate, *Iskandarnamah*, 9–11. The story goes that following a peace between Philip and Darab, the Persian king had asked to marry Philip's daughter and taken her to his empire. But when he realized that she smelled badly, he lost his interest in her and sent her back while she was already pregnant. Cf. Doufika-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, 21. On the ambiguous reception of Alexander in Iran as either an idealized warrior king and sage or evil destroyer both detectable in Firdausi's work, see Josef Wiesehöfer, "The 'Accursed' and the 'Adventurer'. Alexander the Great in Iranian Tradition", in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, edited by David W. Zuwiyya (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 111–132.

73 Johann Christoph Bürgel, trans., *Nizami, Das Alexanderbuch. Iskandarnamēh* (Zürich: Manesse, 1991), vv. 81–84.

74 Cf. Julia Zimmermann, "Narrative Lust am Betrug. Zur Nektānabus-Erzählung in Rudolf von Ems 'Alexander'", in *Verstellung und Betrug im Mittelalter und in der mittelalterlichen Literatur*, edited by Matthias Meyer and Alexander Sager (Göttingen: V&R, 2015), 266, n. 19, 278.

pitions raised by Pseudo-Callisthenes, to the effect that Alexander was in fact the illegitimate offspring of an Egyptian sorcerer-king, presented the Medieval, Western writers with an essential problem. Different approaches emerged in order to solve this problem. Some authors firmly declared that Philip, and no one else, was Alexander's father. For in their eyes, regarding family status, hereditary right and leadership, an illegitimate birth was a severe obstacle and did not suit a future *kosmokrator*.⁷⁵ For example, the majority of authors of French *Alexander Romances* of the 12th century such as Alexandre de Paris or Aléric de Pisançon denied that Alexander had any other father than Philip and called the tradition about his being the sorcerer Nectanebus' "bastard calumnies".⁷⁶ Gautier de Châtillon, writing a Latin epic on Alexander, the *Alexandreis* (12th century), avoids any misunderstandings by plainly presenting Alexander as "the son of Philip".⁷⁷

As for the German *Alexander Romances*, in similarly assessing Alexander's role as the rightful heir of the Macedonian empire, the cleric Lamprecht insists in his *Song of Alexander*, itself influenced by French literature, that Alexander was Philip's legitimate son while the stories about Nectanebus' paternity were told by "evil liars".⁷⁸ On the other hand, authors such as Rudolf of Ems (first half of the 13th century) managed to integrate an idealized Alexander into Christian salvation and universal history because of his heroic deeds without rejecting the tradition about Nectanebus' paternity.⁷⁹ Notably, in his monumental poem

75 Cf. Benjamin van Well, *Mir troumt hînaht ein troum: Untersuchung der Erzählweise von Träumen in mittelhochdeutscher Epik* (Wien: v&R, 2016), 73–74; Jan-Dirk Müller, *Höfische Kompromisse. Acht Kapitel zur höfischen Epik* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2007), 85; Trude Ehlert, "Der Alexanderroman", in *Interpretation. Mittelhochdeutsche Romane und Heldenepen*, edited by Horst Brunner, 21–42 (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1993), 21.

76 Cf. Laurence Harf-Lancner, "Le Florimont d'Aimon de Varennes: un prologue du *Roman d'Alexandre*", *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 37e année, n. 147 (1994): 245. Thomas of Kent is an exception to the rule.

77 Gerhard Streckenbach, ed., *Walter von Châtillon, Das Lied von Alexander dem Großen* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2012), v. 31. Another father figure is Aristotle, see vv. 222–224, 331–332. See in general Max Brocke, *Aristoteles als Alexanders Lehrer in der Legende* (Bonn: Selbstverlag, 1966).

78 Cf. Elisabeth Lienert, ed., *Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2007), vv. 83–84, 88, 265–266; Zimmermann, "Narrative Lust", 266–267. The text came to us in the version of Vorau. There are two versions, *Alexander of Strasbourg* and *Alexander of Basel*, cf. Danielle Buschinger, "German Alexander Romances", in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, edited by Z. David Zuwiyya (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 291–292.

79 Victor Junk, ed., *Rudolf von Ems, Alexander. Ein höfischer Versroman des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Darmstadt: WBG, 1970), vv. 107–2096. Cf. Zimmermann "Narrative Lust", 268–278; Bu-

of Alexander, Ulrich von Etzenbach (late 13th century) blurs the genealogical problem by focusing on Philip and his worries about succession. Instead of pretending to be Ammon, Nectanebus made Olympias believe that he was Philip when she slept with him and conceived the child. Philip, depicted as a rich, virtuous, noble and brave king, had become anxious because of the childlessness of his marriage with Olympias. When she gave birth to Alexander, he was happy and acknowledged the child as his son. Thus, Alexander was perceived as the legitimate and rightful heir to Philip's throne.⁸⁰ Given this, in the Medieval *Alexander Romances*, Philip serves predominantly to provide Alexander with an empire, a right to rule and a reason for the war against the Persian Empire.

The Medieval reception of Philip also produced strange effects. For example, the French author Aimon de Varennes invented alternative ancestors for both Philip and Alexander. His *Florimont*, composed in 1188 and quite popular in France in the 15th and 16th centuries, was a prequel to the French Alexander romances. In this romance of chivalric development, Philip is marginalized again. This time, for a change, it is in favour of his father Florimont who is styled as an adventurous, conquering precursor of Alexander. Again, the tradition that Alexander was in fact fathered by the enchanter Nectanebus and Philip thus raised a bastard son is firmly rejected as calumny.⁸¹

While the focus of reception was still on Alexander during successive centuries, there was also interest in Philip alone in his own right. In the first half of the 18th century, the French writer Claude Mathieu Olivier wrote a favourable biography titled *Histoire de Philippe, roi de Macédoine, et père d'Alexandre*.⁸² It was criticized by the Irish historian Thomas Leland, fellow of Trinity College in Dublin, for its strong prejudice and partiality in favour of Philip. According to him, it was an apology that violated the truth.⁸³ Leland himself, predomi-

schinger, "German Alexander Romances", 301; Simona Slanicka, "Bastarde als Grenzgänger, Kreuzfahrer und Eroberer", *Werkstatt Geschichte* 51 (2009): 9–10.

80 Wendelin Toischer, ed., *Alexander von Ulrich von Etzenbach* (Tübingen: Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins, 1888), vv. 938–941, 1189–1197. Cf. Müller, *Höfische Kompromisse*, 85–89.

81 Alfons Hilka, ed., *Aimon de Varennes, Florimont* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1933), vv. 3883–3893. Cf. Harf-Lancner, "Le *Florimont*", 245. Interestingly, Aimon de Varennes claims that his report stems from Philippiopolis in Greece.

82 Cf. Arnaldo Momigliano, "George Grote and the Study of Greek History", in *Studies on Modern Scholarship*, edited by Glen W. Bowersock and Tim J. Cornell (Berkeley, L.A. and London: UC Press, 1994), 17.

83 Thomas Leland, *The History of the Life and Reign of Philip King of Macedon*, Volume 1, Second edition (London: Thomas Harrison, 1761), xxix–xxxi.

nantly associated with his monumental *History of Ireland from the Invasion of Henry II* (1773),⁸⁴ was responsible for producing a cornerstone of the reception of Philip II. Familiar with the subject because of his translations of Demosthenes' speeches against Philip, in 1758 Leland wrote *The History of the Life and Reign of Philip King of Macedon, the Father of Alexander* in two volumes. Despite his criticism of Claude Mathieu Olivier's apologetic tone, Leland himself tended to idealize Philip. Furthermore, he aimed at distinguishing himself as a writer via this subject. Hence, he stressed the difficult nature of his task to "trace the process of an artful, penetrating, and sagacious prince" who produced "one of the greatest revolutions of power" that called for great accuracy and skill in an author.⁸⁵ Viewed against the socio-cultural and political background of the Enlightened Absolutism, Momigliano stated that in this era, Philip II raised more sympathy than Demosthenes.⁸⁶ However, the case of Leland's *History of the Life and Reign of Philip King of Macedon* is more complex. For Leland does not seem to have considered choosing one over the other. He uses Demosthenes' speeches as an important source. Yet, by doing this, Leland did not much refer to Demosthenes' negative image of Philip. Instead, he relied on Demosthenes' depictions of Athenian passiveness and ineffectiveness regarding the Macedonian rise, along with the degenerate state of the *poleis* in which Philip made numerous politicians his agents by bribes.⁸⁷ In Leland's eyes, the vices and corruption of the Greeks had deprived them of their appropriate conduct and direction. This loss of control led to the Macedonian hegemony over Greece.⁸⁸ According to him, the process of decline started soon after the Persian Wars, when the Greeks ruined themselves by a "spirit of discord and contention for pre-eminence" leading to revenge, dissidence, destruction of each other and depravation of manners which formed the base on which Philip founded his designs.⁸⁹ Carefully observing the errors and distresses of the *poleis*, Philip used his superior supervision in order to undermine Greek power.⁹⁰ Obviously, in Leland's eyes, the establishment of Macedonian central monarchic control over the Greek chaos was an instantiation of rule and order.

84 Cf. John Patrick Delury, "Ex Conflictu et Collisione. The Failure of Irish Historiography, 1745–1790", *Eighteenth-Century Ireland* 15 (2000): 21–23.

85 Leland, *History*, I, xvii–xviii.

86 Cf. Momigliano, "George Grote", 17.

87 Leland, *History*, I, 129–130.

88 Thomas Leland, *The History of the Life and Reign of Philip King of Macedon*, Volume II, Second edition (London: Thomas Harrison, 1775), 417.

89 Leland, *History*, I, 80.

90 Leland, *History*, I, 121, 186–187.

In accordance with Athens' major role in Greece, Leland points at her extreme depravity marking her out as the figurehead of Greek vice: "It was one great corruption in the state of Athens".⁹¹ Respectively, he characterizes the Athenian policy as directed by a weak popular assembly and orators who flattered this weakness—even more so as many of them were already "the pensioners of Philip".⁹² The government showed total depravity and the Athenian youth were obsessed with "public spectacles and effeminate pleasure" and "wanton dalliance with the performers" instead of spending their days in more disciplined activities, instruction and "rational entertainment".⁹³ Symptomatic of this state of corruption, the mercenary leader Chares is depicted as having no real and intrinsic abilities apart from his insatiable avarice.⁹⁴ Hence, the Macedonian conquest under Philip put an end to the perceived mess of the Greeks:

We shall find his life one uniform scheme of watching their commotions, fomenting their disorders, and establishing his own power in their weakness and corruption.⁹⁵

Leland's friend, the Reverend Samuel Madden, wrote a poetic, hagiographic comment on the book and its author that was published along with Leland's text, placed before the preface. In his poem, echoing his friend's description, Madden painted a similarly gloomy picture of fourth-century Greece. In comparison to Roman antiquities by which "the Connoisseur exerts his skill", Madden characterizes Greek History as a confused chaos that "No Marks distinct of Tribes and Dates has us'd".⁹⁶ In addition, Madden links the subject of Philip II's deeds to contemporary politics. Explicitly, he refers to Frederick II of Prussia:

From Philips' Life, all Ranks may Wisdom gain,
Subjects to guard their Rights and kings to reign (...)
And Prussia's King, for conquest born, to fight.⁹⁷

⁹¹ Leland, *History*, I, 131.

⁹² Leland, *History*, I, 84.

⁹³ Leland, *History*, I, 86.

⁹⁴ Leland, *History*, I, 101.

⁹⁵ Leland, *History*, I, 79.

⁹⁶ Leland, *History*, I, xiv.

⁹⁷ Leland, *History*, I, xiii.

As for the association, Frederick II was known for his patronage of arts and philosophy as well as for his military campaigns such as in the Silesian Wars.⁹⁸ In 1756, in the Convention of Westminster, an Anglo-Prussian alliance was formalized by an alliance between Britain and Prussia in 1758, namely the year of the publication of Leland's historiography. Therefore, by comparing Frederick II to Philip II, Madden positively referenced a British ally. Against this background, Philip was styled as a role model and precursor of the enlightened, absolute monarch.⁹⁹ Consequently, Leland's Philip is a refined, erudite man of taste who "affected an extraordinary reverence for Aristotle" and was the first to introduce arts and elegance to the allegedly hitherto "barbarous" and uncultivated empire.¹⁰⁰ Like at the culturally flourishing court of Frederick II with his policies of patronage, at Philip's court, philosophers, poets, actors, musicians, men of genius and artists were received and rewarded.¹⁰¹ This image of Philip as the founder of courtly culture in Macedonia, cultivating the Macedonian "barbarians", served to depict him as a civilizing force. However, it was far from the truth as Leland will have known himself. Traditionally, even in the early times of their dynasty, the Argeads had patronized Greek art, artists and writers.¹⁰² Already Alexander I (ca. 498/95–ca. 450 BC) was associated with the Greek poets Pindar and Bacchylides and especially Archelaos (414/13–399 BC) was known for his patronage of Greek culture.¹⁰³ Leland himself had written that Alexander I learned "the honourable arts" of Greece.¹⁰⁴

As for the reason for his success, Leland's Philip owes his achievements to his own personal abilities and individual qualities.¹⁰⁵ According to Leland, his special personality played a key role. Philip is depicted as amiable, charming, cordial and kind, distinguished by his genius, firmness, greatness of mind, justness and accuracy.¹⁰⁶

98 Cf. Peter-Michael Hahn, *Friedrich II. von Preußen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2013), 50–93, 146–168.

99 Cf. Momigliano, "George Grote", 17.

100 Leland, *History*, I, 188, 97.

101 Leland, *History*, I, 191.

102 Cf. Frances Pownall, "The Role of Greek Literature in Intellectual Macedonian Circles", in *The History of the Argeads—New Perspectives*, edited by Sabine Müller et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017), 215–229.

103 Cf. Moloney, "Philippus", 234–240.

104 Leland, *History*, I, 12.

105 Leland, *History*, I, 5.

106 Leland, *History*, II, 468.

His person was remarkably graceful, and commanded affection and respect: his address and deportment were obliging and insinuating: his consummate penetration had not the least appearance of reserve: he had affability the most pleasing and flattering; natural and unstudied, without that timidity and hesitating condescension, that awkward and ridiculous mixture of caution and affected openness, which the great may sometimes betray, who knew the use of affability, and vainly hope to appear what nature forbids them to attempt.¹⁰⁷

This charming Philip, a refined man of taste who behaves among his nobles like a *primus inter pares*,¹⁰⁸ is born to be successful. For most of all, he is restlessly and ambitiously striving for power and glory by any means:

If corruption was necessary, he knew its power and was perfect in the art of propagating and recommending it (...) His virtues and vices were directed and proportioned to his great designs of power (...) If he was unjust, he was like Caesar, unjust for the sake of the empire.¹⁰⁹

Leland's Philip is also made compatible with contemporary moral codes: he is characterized as a prince who was assisted by his wife and faithful ministers.¹¹⁰ In addition, Philip was well-bred and had "a wit indulged with apparent ease, but ever well corrected".¹¹¹

Notably, Leland's praise of Philip was accompanied by the diminution of Alexander and his deeds. According to Leland, Alexander "had to prove himself worthy of so great a father" but failed in moral terms, as he became "intoxicated with his successes" and "conceived the vanity of being thought the son of Jupiter" as well as in military terms for he did not fight enemies equal to Philip's opponents.¹¹² It is interesting that Leland felt the need to comment unfavourably on Alexander. The comparison is another proof of the inextricable connection between father and son in their receptions. Even when the focus was on Philip, the comparison or at least association with Alexander seemed to be inevitable; no matter if Philip was sometimes subordinated to Alexander, he was depicted as the 'real great' Argead whose deeds surpassed those of his son.

¹⁰⁷ Leland, *History*, I, 47.

¹⁰⁸ Leland, *History*, I, 193.

¹⁰⁹ Leland, *History*, II, 469, 471.

¹¹⁰ Leland, *History*, II, 442.

¹¹¹ Leland, *History*, I, 47.

¹¹² Leland, *History*, I, 94–95; II, 472.

In sum, while the contemporary sources offer insight predominantly on the reception of Philip's relations with Greece, in his afterlife, he is mainly perceived as Alexander's father or, due to the *Greek Alexander Romance*, as his foster-father. Even when Philip was treated in his own right, the subject of Alexander was implicit and could not be avoided. Thus, no matter what image of Philip occurred, the label of being 'the father of Alexander the Great' was imprinted indelibly on the cultural memory.

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The Reception of Alexander in the Ptolemaic Dynasty

John Holton

The existence of the Ptolemaic dynasty, the longest lasting of the Hellenistic kingdoms (305–30 BC), was framed at both ends by the figure of Alexander. At one end, the first Ptolemy, then satrap of Egypt in the fragmented landscape of the post-Alexander regencies, had seized Alexander's corpse and funeral carriage in 321/0 BC and had thereafter engaged in a programme of conspicuous memorialization of the dead king that aimed at strengthening his political position in the great struggle among the *Diadochi*.¹ At the other end, the Roman takeover of Ptolemaic Egypt in 30 BC, ruled until that point by its last monarch Cleopatra VII, was symbolically reaffirmed by Octavian's entrance to the tomb of Alexander in Alexandria, where he paid due reverence to the figure of Alexander but not, tellingly, to the Ptolemaic monarchs who had been interred in the same burial complex.² In this way, Alexander's body, and the transferability of charisma and mystique that was implied by closeness of physical proximity with it, was utilized in both the construction and destruction of the legitimacy of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

It was arguably an Alexander-centred mode of ideological discourse that Octavian was encountering and trying to manipulate in the aftermath of the demise of Antony and Cleopatra. By denigrating the Ptolemies and removing the ideological cornerstone of their dynasty, namely their fundamental association with Alexander, while performing his own ritual of making contact, he was perhaps seeking to establish his own legitimacy as ruler in Egypt, at a single point of removal from Alexander rather than through the filter of the pre-existing dynastic framework. That the body of Alexander continued to pos-

¹ On Ptolemy's seizure and memorialization of the body, see Diod. Sic. 18.28.2–6.

² Suet. *Div. Aug.* 18.1; Dio 51.16.5. For discussion, see A. Erskine, "Life After Death: Alexandria and the Body of Alexander", *Greece & Rome* 2nd ser. 49 (2002), 163–179; "Approaching the Hellenistic World", in *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*, ed. A. Erskine (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 1–15, esp. 1–2.

sess this latent power as a symbol is affirmed when another Roman emperor, Septimius Severus, visited the tomb in c. AD199. We are told by Cassius Dio that Severus locked up Alexander's tomb so that nobody would be able to view the conqueror's body in the future,³ probably in an attempt to deny any possibility that other figures could access it and be enhanced by its symbolic potential. In this, Severus perhaps had in mind the attempts of his one-time civil war opponent Pescennius Niger, who had apparently engaged in *imitatio Alexandri*,⁴ but more broadly he was probably attempting to regulate and contain the (by then) long-established imperial reflex of such *imitatio* in its most basic incarnation of direct contact.⁵ Just as Octavian had sought to deny the dynastic viability of his conquered Ptolemaic opponents and superimpose his own closeness with Alexander via the symbol of his body, so Severus was attempting to control the body as a source of ideological power and to suppress, pre-emptively, any dynastic superimposition in turn.

As will be clear from the above discussion, interpreting Alexander's reception in political contexts after his death involves dealing with complex and multi-layered traditions of engagement, between specific arrangements of meaning as well as between broader strategies of manipulation. Set in this *longue durée*, Alexander's long-lived political reception in the Ptolemaic dynasty is fundamentally important. In addition to being a long-term, continuous, and linear tradition rooted in the immediate aftermath of Alexander's death—a period in which modes of posthumous engagement with Alexander's model were being imagined and developed for the first time—Ptolemaic royal ideology is arguably unique among *loci* for ancient receptions of Alexander in its implication of an extreme, immersive closeness between model and imitators. Moreover, the densely interconnected nature of individual Ptolemaic engagements with the Alexandrian model makes the reception of Alexander in the Ptolemaic dynasty an important topic for isolated discussion.

The principal aim of this chapter, then, is to explore the role of Alexander in the ideological self-fashioning of the Ptolemaic monarchs. The main discussion consists of a study of Theocritus' seventeenth *Idyll*, an encomiastic poem for the second Ptolemaic king Ptolemy II Philadelphus delivered in

3 Dio 76.13.2.

4 Dio 75.6.1–2.

5 For discussion, see Erskine, "Life After Death", 163–179. Evidently, Severus' closure of Alexander's tomb did not have any lasting effect, since his son, Caracalla, visited it in turn and performed his own symbolic act of making contact: see Herodian 4.8–9; Dio. 78.7–8.

perhaps the mid-late 270s BC.⁶ This poem is highly significant among ancient evidence for the Ptolemaic tradition of Alexander-reception, since it encapsulates in a single text many of the major characteristics that both were dominant during the formation of that tradition and continued to be resonant in the endurance of that tradition, until the end of dynasty's existence. Accordingly, this chapter's discussion, in addition to analysing the particular nature of constructions of Alexander in this poem, focuses on the ways in which its poetic strategies for depicting Alexander's dynastic importance can be connected to longer-term aspects of Ptolemaic ideological activity, especially in relation to the reigns of Ptolemy I Soter (satrap between 323–305 BC, king 305–282 BC) and Ptolemy II Philadelphus (r. 285–246). Some core features of the immersiveness of the Ptolemaic royal appropriation of Alexander are established here: the construction of Alexander as the dynasty's symbolic founder and ancestor, his role in the development of a co-extensive Ptolemaic ruler cult, and as an exemplary archetype for key tenets of Ptolemaic royal ideology and practice, such as ideas of universal monarchy and the possession and redistribution of immense wealth. The final part of the chapter traces the endurance of the ideological schemes instantiated here, and points to the vitality of a continuous Ptolemaic reception of Alexander during the dynasty's dying days under Cleopatra and Marc Antony.

Theocritus' *Encomium*: Alexander and Ptolemaic Ideology in the *longue durée*

Theocritus' *Encomium* (*Idyll* XVII in the Theocritean *corpus*), addressed to the second Ptolemaic king Ptolemy II Philadelphus, is a uniquely valuable text for the historian of Hellenistic kingship. It does not simply cast light on a particular phase in the history of Ptolemaic royal ideology, but also constitutes a sustained intellectual reflection on the contemporary mores of *basileia* ('kingship'). Even though the *Encomium* was an artistic piece developed and performed by an external figure, the poet Theocritus, and was not an unthinking piece of propaganda turned out by central state machinery, the repeated conjunctions between the poem's content and other external evidence, as demonstrated below, enable us viably to read the poem as a reflection of Ptolemaic ideology, one that is mediated through Theocritus' own discursive and generic models.

6 On the date, see R. Hunter, *Theocritus: Encomium of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 3–7.

Even if this was not the *Encomium*'s sole function, nor is this its sole value for the modern-day interpreter, the care taken by the poet to engage with contemporary royal ideological concerns—even the Ptolemies' particular positions as masters of the double world of Greco-Macedonian and Egyptian cultures, as has been explored in important recent scholarship⁷—makes the *Encomium* a singularly useful source for tracking important ideological points. This is in keeping with the culture of literary sponsorship at the Ptolemaic royal court,⁸ which involved the patronized, and those that sought patronage, seeking to position themselves favourably by communicating in the symbolic language and vocabulary that was meaningful and current in that setting.

Early in the poem we find a sustained imagination of Alexander's position in relation to the formation of the dynasty. After the poet's assertion of self-orientation and subject matter in the opening twelve lines, Theocritus' *Encomium* turns to the theme of paternal parentage:⁹

- Ἐκ πατέρων οἷος μὲν ἔην τελέσαι μέγα ἔργον
 Λαγείδας Πτολεμαῖος, ὅτε φρεσὶν ἐγκατάθοιτο
 15 βουλάν, ἂν οὐκ ἄλλος ἀνὴρ οἷός τε νοῆσαι.
 τήνον καὶ μακάρεσσι πατὴρ ὁμότιμον ἔθηκεν
 ἀθανάτοισι, καὶ οἱ χρύσεος θρόνος ἐν Διὸς οἴκῳ
 δέδμηται· παρὰ δ' αὐτὸν Ἀλέξανδρος φίλα εἰδώς

7 On Ptolemaic 'double culture', see, *inter alia*, W. Peremans, "Les Lagides, les élites indigènes et la monarchie bicéphale", in *Le système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome*, ed. E. Lévy (Strasbourg: Université des Sciences Humaines, 1987), 327–343; L. Koenen, "The Ptolemaic King as Religious Figure", in *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World*, ed. A.W. Bulloch et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 25–115; D. Selden, "Alibis", *Classical Antiquity* 17 (1998), 289–412; S.A. Stephens, *Seeing Double: Intercultural Poetics in Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). On 'double culture' and Theocritus *Idyll* xvii in particular, see Hunter, *Encomium*, 46–53; M. Heerink, "Merging paradigms: translating pharaonic ideology in Theocritus' *Idyll* xvii", in *Interkulturalität in der Alten Welt: Vorderasien, Hellas, Ägypten und die vielfältigen Ebenen des Kontakts*, ed. R. Rollinger et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 383–408.

8 See, *inter alia*, G. Weber, *Dichtung und höfische Gesellschaft: Die Rezeption von Zeitgeschichte am Hof der ersten drei Ptolemäer* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993); A. Erskine, "Culture and Power in Ptolemaic Egypt: The Museum and Library of Alexandria", *Greece & Rome* 2nd ser. 42 (1995), 38–48; Hunter, *Encomium*, 24–45; J. Klooster, *Poetry as Window and Mirror: Positioning the Poet in Hellenistic Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

9 All excerpts of Theocritus' text are from A.S.F. Gow, *Theocritus*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952 (repr. 1965)). The translations are my own.

- ἐδριάει, Πέρσαισι βαρὺς θεὸς αἰολομίτρας.
 20 ἀντία δ' Ἡρακλῆος ἔδρα κενταυροφόνιοι
 ἴδρυται στερεοῖο τετυγμένα ἐξ ἀδάμαντος·
 ἔνθα σὺν ἄλλοισιν θαλίας ἔχει Οὐρανίδησι,
 χαίρων υἱωνῶν περιώσιον υἱωνοῖσιν,
 ὅττι σφεων Κρονίδης μελέων ἐξείλετο γήρας,
 25 ἀθάνατοι δὲ καλεῦνται ἐοὶ νέποδες γεγαῶτες.
 ἄμφω γὰρ πρόγονός σφιν ὁ καρτερός Ἡρακλείδας,
 ἀμφότεροι δ' ἀριθμεῦνται ἐς ἔσχατον Ἡρακλῆα.
 τῷ καὶ ἐπεὶ daίτηθεν ἴοι κεκορημένος ἦδη
 νέκταρος εὐδόμοιο φίλας ἐς δῶμ' ἀλόχοιο,
 30 τῷ μὲν τόξον ἔδωκεν ὑπωλένιον τε φαρέτραν,
 τῷ δὲ σιδάρειον σκύταλον κεχαραγμένον ὄζοις·
 οἱ δ' εἰς ἀμβρόσιον θάλαμον λευκοσφύρου Ἥβας
 ὅπλα καὶ αὐτὸν ἄγουσι γενειήταν Διὸς υἱόν.

From his ancestors, such a man for accomplishing a great deed was Ptolemy son of Lagus, whenever he crafted in his mind's eye a plan, such that no other man could have imagined. The father made him equal in honour even to the blessed immortals, and a golden throne is built for him in Zeus' household. Beside him, kindly minded, sits Alexander, crusher of Persians, shimmering-mitred god. Opposite is established the seat of centaur-slaying Heracles, wrought of solid adamant. There he is in feast along with other heavenly ones, vastly rejoicing in the sons of his sons. For Cronus' son has removed old age from their limbs, and his very own descendants are called immortal. For both have as ancestor Heracles' mighty son, and both reckon as their ultimate origin Heracles. And whenever, having now sated himself on fragrant nectar, he departs from the feast to his loving wife's house, to one he gives his bow and the quiver that hangs under-arm, and to the other his iron club, jagged with knots. Into white-ankled Hebe's ambrosial chamber they guide the arms and the bearded son of Zeus himself.

THEOC. *Id.* XVII 13–34

This striking vignette represents the complex fusion of roles assigned to Alexander in the ideological construction of the Ptolemaic dynasty. It is worth trying to isolate and untangle individual strands in order to appreciate the richness of the construction *in toto*, even while recognizing that the interlocking, co-informative nature of these individual parts is the ultimate aim of the poetic strategy.

These lines establish the three figures of Ptolemy I, Alexander, and Heracles as ancestors of the Ptolemaic royal line, while also establishing Zeus himself as the ultimate genetic root shared by all three. In basic terms, an august Heraclid lineage is ascribed to the Ptolemies, thus providing the dynasty with a genealogical prestige and legitimacy that closely recalls the model of the Argead dynasty to which Alexander had belonged.¹⁰ In that vein, the poem establishes the Ptolemaic line as a parallel offshoot to earlier Macedonian royalty, offering a present-day alternative, sharing the same essential genetic character, to the by then defunct Argeadae. This strategy should be imagined as having a strong general significance in the contemporary world of competing Hellenistic dynasties, among which claims of links to old Macedonia and Greece carried some force. However, this construction would have little in the way of particular significance, as an isolated strategy, without further explanation and substantiation, which is provided here in the person of Alexander. Alexander constitutes an intermediary, explanatory model for the assertion of Ptolemy's Heraclid ancestry, a symbolic double through which this ancestry can be understood and further interpreted: Ptolemy is descended from Heracles, just like Alexander; Heraclid Ptolemy sits alongside Heraclid Alexander. The poem's ascription of similarities of role, function, and position between Ptolemy and Alexander, to the point of imputing equal comparison (discussed further below), serves to reinforce this comparison. Alexander is thus held up as the model in whose light Ptolemy should be perceived, and their kingships are established as comparable.

Rumours of Ptolemy's being an illegitimate son of Philip II, reported by a number of late sources, may be meaningful in this context, though it is worth recognizing that such rumours could, with equal plausibility, have been developed by other figures in other contexts;¹¹ and Ptolemy's designation as Λαγείδας, "Lagus' son", makes unlikely an implication of illegitimate birth, which would also sit uneasily with lines later in the poem (lines 40–44) that stress marital security and paternal surety as important characteristics of the Ptolemaic family. Even so, there seems to be a blurring of the lines between imagining Alexander and Ptolemy as part of a single lineage and construing the two as interre-

10 On the original Argead claim to Heraclid ancestry, "performed" by Alexander I at the Olympic Games in the early 5th century, see Hdt. 5.22.

11 For discussion, see N. Collins, "The various fathers of Ptolemy I", *Mnemosyne* 50 (1997), 436–476; M. Lianou, "The Role of the Argeadae in the Legitimation of the Ptolemaic Dynasty: Rhetoric and Practice", in *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*, ed. E. Carney and D. Ogden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 123–133, esp. 128–130.

lated but separate offshoots of the Heraclid family tree. This subtle vagueness about relations between the Heraclid lines reinforces the closeness of the parallel between Ptolemy and Alexander; this can be understood as a conscious strategy designed to inform one of the poem's overall themes of family continuity and intergenerational replication, which seek to position Ptolemy and his descendants, Alexander's Heraclid relatives, as the rightful successors and continuators of Alexander's rule. Here, Ptolemy's and Alexander's shared Heraclid *physis* implies rather more than simple dynastic pedigree in the form of a blood-claim, and indeed seems to be contingent on an understanding of shared character and ability, implying a fundamentally Alexandrian nature for the ways in which Ptolemy and his descendants exercised their kingships.

These lines also establish a close similarity, perhaps even equality, between the roles, functions and positions of Ptolemy and Alexander. This construction is evident through the imagined seating arrangement, in which Ptolemy and Alexander are seated side by side, with Alexander presumably occupying a golden throne similar to that occupied by Ptolemy.¹² Perhaps a more obvious form of equalization is found in the detail of Ptolemy's and Alexander's attendance on their inebriated ancestor, Heracles, as both perform the role of bearing Heracles' arms to his bedchamber, one carrying his bow and quiver, the other his club; which individual carries which of these symbols is left unstated and is, perhaps, unimportant in light of the implied equality. While establishing both figures as respectfully in service to their ancestral elder, this implied equality suggests the cooperation of Alexander and Ptolemy, even after death. This has significant implications for considering the continuing posthumous sponsorship of the present-day Ptolemaic monarchy, since both are clearly now *theoi*—a detail discussed at greater length below—and so clearly are in a position to continue to exert active influence, with a benign outlook, on their inheritors. The ascription of close companionship and joint service in the Olympian world also recalls similar activities in life, during Alexander's campaigns, which had been stressed—in so far as we can judge from the

12 The detail of the ῥόνος in line 17 is an emendation from the δόμος transmitted in the manuscripts (for apparatus, see Gow, *Theocritus*, ad loc.), and so should not be pushed too far; but this emendation, both on general grounds and because Ptolemy's and Alexander's positions are surely meant to mirror Heracles', himself sat upon an adamantine ῥόνος, is surely correct—even though, strictly speaking, it is not necessary (on this point, see M.A. Rossi, *Theocritus Idyll xvii: A Stylistic Commentary* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1989): 37). Thus this detail can be made to provide additional support for the themes so well-established through other strategies of assimilation. For further discussion of the difficulties of δόμος, see Hunter, *Encomium*, 112–113.

extant fragments and from Arrian's narratives that plausibly derive from it—in Ptolemy's own historical work on Alexander.¹³ Such closeness of companionship is brought into particularly high relief in Arrian's retelling of Ptolemy's exploits in India, which casts Ptolemy in an Alexandrian light and, through suggestive linguistic configuration, reveals an attempt to position Ptolemy almost as Patroclus to Alexander's Achilles.¹⁴ In this regard, the close companionship presented by Theocritus is a supernatural, divine reflection on an earthly, mortal dynamic that had been stressed elsewhere in earlier Ptolemaic self-construction. An emphasis on close companionship with Alexander, found so frequently in ideological self-orientation in the period of the *Diadochi*,¹⁵ evidently continued to have symbolic importance, perhaps also echoes of a legitimating discourse, even at a remove of approximately fifty years after Alexander's death. More particularly, however, we should read this as Philadelphus' continuation of an ideological relationship with the figure of Alexander that began initiated by his father, and so as part of a broader complex of ideological inheritances.

The divine dimension of the scene depicted by Theocritus warrants important mention on account of its centrality in the broader Ptolemaic scheme of using Alexander's image. Alexander is called, in explicit terms, *theos*. This reflects the widespread trend of divinizing Alexander that had become evident even in the early years after his death, and indeed perhaps during his own lifetime,¹⁶ but more particularly alludes to the stature enjoyed by the late king in the cultic landscape of Ptolemaic Egypt. In addition to the kistic cult that Alexander received in Alexandria itself, we know that Ptolemy had instituted a state-wide cult of Alexander as early as the late fourth century, one of whose early chief priests was Ptolemy's own brother Menelaus and which

13 On the nature of Ptolemy's work, and Arrian's use of it, see A.B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 22–27.

14 See A.B. Bosworth, *Alexander and the East: The Tragedy of Triumph* (Oxford: Clarendon), 44–47.

15 For a general discussion, see A. Meeus, "Alexander's Image in the Age of the Successors", in *Alexander the Great: A New History*, ed. W. Heckel and L. Tritle (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 235–250.

16 An enormously contested issue, but see, *inter alia*, E. Badian, "The Deification of Alexander the Great", in *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honor of Charles F. Edson*, ed. H.J. Dell (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1981), 27–71; A.B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 278–290; B. Dreyer, "Heroes, Cults, and Divinity", in *Alexander the Great: A New History*, ed. W. Heckel and L. Tritle (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 218–234.

continued to be presided over by individuals close to the Ptolemaic monarchy into the reign of Philadelphus and beyond.¹⁷ This state-wide cult was not simply another imposition on an already theologically dense Egyptian landscape, but rather was institutionally embedded through the stipulation that its priesthood serve as an eponymous system for calendrical reckonings, according to which public documents would be dated in terms of tenures of the chief priests of Alexander. This will have ensured for the cult a significant level of diffusion into public consciousness, in what should be imagined as a deliberate, co-ordinated strategy for state-wide interpenetration rather than a primarily personal invocation of Alexander's posthumous memory. By the time of Theocritus' poem, therefore, Alexander already occupied a distinctive role as a state-sponsored *theos* in Ptolemaic Egypt as a result of Ptolemy's actions. The divinity of the Alexander in the poem, therefore, is partly a product of historical Ptolemaic construction.

The divinity of the Ptolemy in the poem, moreover, is directly a product of Philadelphus' actions. After the death of his father, Philadelphus deified Ptolemy, initiating another state-wide cult for a deceased king.¹⁸ In this way, there was a divine equivalence between the figures of Alexander and Ptolemy in the cultic landscape of Ptolemaic Egypt, which informs the Olympian companionship between the two that is imagined in Theocritus' poem. However, the nature of dynastic divinization among the Ptolemies came to attain its own singular character on the death of Berenice, one of Ptolemy's wives and Philadelphus' mother, at which point Philadelphus developed a joint cult of his parents in the guise of the *Theoi Soteres* ("Saviour Gods").¹⁹ This historical development, too, is represented in Theocritus' *Encomium*, in a later section

17 The earliest reference to Menelaus' priesthood is recorded in *P. Hib.* 1.84a, which refers to his fourth tenure in the year equivalent to 285/4 BC. Another notable example is the Ptolemaic admiral and *philos* Callicrates of Samos, who—in addition being active in the foundation of other Ptolemaic cult sites, such as the temple to Arsinoe Aphrodite Zephyritis at Zephyrium, near Alexandria (for discussion of this, and of his memorialization in Posidippus' poetry, see P. Bing, "Posidippus and the Admiral: Kallikrates of Samos in the Milan Epigrams", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 43 (2002/3), 243–266)—was the first eponymous priest of the combined cult of Alexander and the *theoi adelphoi* (for evidence, see *P. Hib.* 11.199.ii.12; for general discussion, H. Hauben, "Callicrates of Samos and Patroclus of Macedon, champions of Ptolemaic thalassocracy", in *The Ptolemies, the Sea and the Nile: Studies in Waterborne Power*, ed. K. Buraselis, M. Stefanou, and D.J. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 39–65).

18 See S. Müller, *Das hellenistische Königspaar in medialen Repräsentation: Ptolemaios II. und Arsinoe II.* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 251.

19 See the synthesis at Müller, *Das hellenistische Königspaar*, 251–262.

(lines 121–130) which describes Philadelphus, along with his sister-wife Arsinoe (11), performing frequent sacrifices “to his loving mother and father” (ματρὶ φίλᾳ καὶ πατρὶ): a clear reference to the cult of the *Theoi Soteres*. This particularly familial variation of ruler cult, which we will see replicated and intensified with later Ptolemaic examples, marks a striking contrast with the solitude of the divinized Alexander, a solitude which is mitigated and lessened only by the poet looking both backwards (to Heracles) and forwards (to Ptolemy and his family) to other links on an ancestral line, in a broader scheme of uniting the Heraclid and Ptolemaic lines via the figure of Alexander. It is also worth noting, however, that Berenice also received her own particular cult, separate from that of the *Theoi Soteres*, through close association and assimilation with the goddess Aphrodite, which would in time constitute a particularly Ptolemaic and dynastic brand of the practice of *synnaoi theoi* (“temple-sharing gods”), not least in the case of Philadelphus’ own wife Arsinoe.²⁰ Berenice’s cult, too, is captured in Theocritus’ poem (lines 45–52), where Berenice’s enduring benign influence is also stressed.

Although Berenice is characterized as ἡπιος (“kind” or “gentle”) to all mortals, and as having a particular erotic influence, due to her temple-sharing with Aphrodite, this recalls the characterization of both Alexander as a single figure (line 18) and Ptolemy and Berenice as a pair (line 123, probably alluding to their cult as the *Theoi Soteres*) as φίλα (here meaning “loving” or “kindly”).²¹ The linguistic repetition, though in keeping with the formulaic and metre-constrained nature of poetic verse, ascribes a parallelism in outlook and agency to the figures thus described. This carries with it an important ideological claim, namely of these figures’ equal interest in sponsoring contemporary representatives of the Ptolemaic *basileia*, and it implicitly suggests their continuing ability to exert some kind of active influence. The benignity of Alexander and Ptolemy and Berenice, then, while further emphasising a comparability of role and position between the symbolic and real founders of the dynasty, also immerses these figures in the same area of activity, a posthumous, divine reflection of the idea of performing royal power according to an Alexandrian model. In death, as in life, Ptolemaic monarchs are imagined as sharing in the same essential character as Alexander—a point which must be understood as rooted not just in general ideas of imitable exemplarity, but also in the inevitable enactment a shared genetic *physis*.

20 For discussion of Arsinoe’s cults, see E.D. Carney, *Arsinoe of Egypt and Macedon: A Royal Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 106–134.

21 On the language of Theocritus’ *Encomium*, which includes doricizing as well as epicizing linguistic forms and choices, see Hunter, *Encomium*, 53–63.

The mutuality of divinity between Alexander and Ptolemy, and their closeness of Olympian companionship, also reflects the disposition of both kings' remains and the subsequent staging of spectacular veneration. Ptolemy had, at some point after seizing Alexander's funeral carriage in 321/0,²² interred Alexander's body with great pomp and ceremony in Alexandria, and instituted funeral games consisting of *thusiai kai agones*—"sacrifices and contests"—to memorialise him and to attach to himself, as enactor of this devotion and agent of burial, his symbolic power and legacy.²³ Likewise, on the death of Ptolemy I, Philadelphus had at some point—the exact date is very much contested—instituted a festival, the Ptolemaieia, in memory of his deceased father, giving Ptolemy, too, *thusiai kai agones* in a strong show of dynastic respect and unity.²⁴ Both kings were also eventually interred, perhaps initially less closely than would be institutionalised for the dynasty at a later date, in proximate locations in the city of Alexandria, later part of the great *sēma* ("tomb") that housed all Ptolemaic monarchs' remains alongside those of Alexander²⁵—the ideological closeness implied by which was not lost on Octavian in 30 BC, as we have already seen above. Here, Heracles' role in the poem becomes significant again, as a legendary model for the historical institutionalisation of *apotheosis* in the cases of Alexander and Ptolemy. Through this aspect of Heracles' life-story, the audience is encouraged to view Ptolemy and Alexander in light of their ancestor: they are latter-day heroes who demonstrate such overwhelming excellence of achievement that they become gods at the point of their deaths. There is a chain of ideological development, therefore, at work in Ptolemaic self-construction: Ptolemy is modelled on Alexander, just as Alexander is modelled on Heracles, and each construction informs the other.

The nature of lifetime achievement is given interesting emphasis in the cases of Heracles and Alexander: the latter is described as Πέρσαισι βαρὺς ("crusher of Persians"), while the former is characterised as κενταυροφόνος ("centaur-slayer"). Both characterisations are to be understood as referring to

22 It is probable that Ptolemy brought Alexander first to Memphis, then to Alexandria, and that the relocation occurred between 320 and 312 BC. For discussion, see P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 2.31–32; Erskine, "Life After Death", 163–179; D.J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 2.

23 Diod. Sic. 18.28.2–6.

24 See e.g. *SEG* 28.60, ll. 55–59, detailing Callias of Sphettus' leading a delegation to the Ptolemaieia, described as τ[ῆ]ν θυσίαν καὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας τῷ πατ[ρί] ("the sacrifices and games for his [sc. Philadelphus'] father").

25 See Erskine, "Life After Death", 163–179.

the same broader field of meaning, namely the destruction of a chaotic menace and, implicitly, the establishment of an ordered space. These are well-known, and long-established, symbolic schemes, and were often constructed metonymously, such as the centauric frieze on the Athenian Parthenon or Lysias' centaur-focused myth-historical content in his *Epitaphios*, both of which are to be understood, in part, as (not particularly subtle) coded allusions to Hellenic victory in the Persian Wars.²⁶ In that sense, Alexander's historical conquering of the Persians is reconstructed as the equal of Heracles' mythical defeat of the centaurs, attesting to another degree of posthumous assimilation between Alexander and his genetic exemplar—an increasing feature of posthumous construction of Alexander's image from the age of the *Diadochi* onwards. In that sense, and given the equalisation and companionship argued for above, the lack of a corresponding symbolic creation of order in the poem's characterisation of Ptolemy is quite striking, and the implication seems to be not of Ptolemy's creation of order, but of his inheritance of a realm that had been cleared of a chaotic enemy by his Heraclid predecessor. This is perhaps confirmed, later in poem, in lines (98–105) which allude to Philadelphus' ability to defend Egyptian land against external transgressors, his unalterable stewardship signified through proficiency in the art of the spear. Another function of Alexander in the poem, therefore, is as the trailblazer of an ordered royal space that could be inherited and protected in turn by his chosen relatives, the Ptolemies. Alexander, taking on the role that Heracles had served in relation the Argead dynasty, thus becomes the symbolic founder of the Ptolemaic kingship and a key part of its mythicizing genesis story, and the Ptolemies protectors and continuators of his legacy.

This ascription of kingdom-creating agency to Alexander, based closely on and informed by the trailblazing archetype of Heracles' monster-killing, finds a parallel in the symbolic narrative that can be interpreted in Ptolemy I's development of a numismatic iconographical programme. Like all his contemporaries in the early post-Alexander period, Ptolemy initially continued to use coin-types developed in Alexander's standardised imperial coinage, namely—for silver tetradrachm issues—an obverse type of Heracles wearing a lion-scalp and a reverse type of enthroned Zeus *aetophoros* ("eagle-bearing"). However, in approximately 320/19, shortly after defeating Perdiccas' invasion of Egypt in the summer of 320, Ptolemy developed an entirely new and innovative obverse

26 On Lysias' *Epitaphios*, see J. Grethlein, J. *The Greeks and Their Past: Poetry, Oratory and History in the Fifth Century BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 105–125.

type, though keeping the same reverse, for his silver tetradrachm issues.²⁷ This new type featured a portrait of Alexander wearing an elephant-scalp headdress and an *aegis* tied with snakes, with a ram's horn signifying the god Ammon jutting from his temple; some types of this early design also feature a headband, either a diadem or *mitra*, which comes to be more and more evident over time with repeat issues.²⁸ Lion-killing Heracles comes to be replaced by elephant-killing Alexander, in a succession of motifs that closely recalls the Theocritean metonymy between Heracles' centaur-slaying and Alexander's crushing of the Persians. Ptolemy's own appearance on obverse types, in the late fourth or early third century, wearing a diadem and *aegis*,²⁹ likewise connotes his succession to the image of Alexander devised in the tetradrachms of 320/19 onwards; and his lack of a symbolic "monster-killing" iconographical element, in spite of the other successional imagery, fits well with the scheme of inheritance and protection argued for above. Thus in numismatic iconography we perhaps find a corresponding narrative of the removal of chaos and the inheritance of and rule over an ordered royal space.

The qualification of the territorial dimensions of the ordered royal space created by Alexander and ruled by the Ptolemies is also worth exploring. In lines 77–91, Philadelphus' sway is represented as extending throughout parts of Phoenicia, Arabia, Syria, Libya, Ethiopia, Pamphylia, Cilicia, Lycia, Caria, and the Cyclades, in addition to Egypt itself. While reflecting the asserted geographical reach of Ptolemaic power (especially sea power) during Philadelphus' reign, the lengthy, catalogic nature of Theocritus' listing implies an infinity and universality to Ptolemaic dominion;³⁰ as the two sentences that frame the catalogic section claim, "great is the wealth that attends on him, many are that lands that he dominates, and many the seas" (ll. 76–77: πολὺς δὲ οἱ ὀλβος ὁπαδεῖ, πολλὰς δὲ κρατέει γαίαις, πολλὰς δὲ θαλάσσας) and "the entire sea and land

27 On the dates of Ptolemy's early coinages, see C.C. Lorber, "A Revised Chronology for the Coinage of Ptolemy I", *Numismatic Chronicle* 165 (2005), 45–64.

28 For discussion of this imagery, see C.C. Lorber, "Theos Aigiochos: The Aegis in Ptolemaic Portraits of the Divine King," in *More than Men, Less than Gods: Studies in Royal Cult and Imperial Worship*, ed. P. Iossif et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 293–356.

29 See Lorber, "Theos Aigiochos", 293–356.

30 See C. Marquaille, "The Foreign Policy of Ptolemy II", in *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and His World*, ed. P. McKechnie and P. Guillaume (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 52–54. For broader discussion of the *longue durée* of ideas of universal dominion, see R. Strootman, "Queen of Kings: Cleopatra VII and the Donations of Alexandria", in *Kingdoms and Principalities in the Roman Near East*, ed. T. Kaizer and M. Facella (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 140–157. Cf. U. Eco, *The Infinity of Lists* (London: MacLehose Press, 2009).

and roaring rivers are ruled over by Ptolemy" (ll. 91–92: θάλασσα δὲ πᾶσα καὶ αἶα καὶ ποταμοὶ κελάδοντες ἀνάσσονται Πτολεμαίῳ). This is important in connection with the ideological parlance of 'universal monarchy' that was animated in contemporary Hellenistic royal discourse,³¹ as it implies Philadelphus' superiority of power and position in an international landscape of competing dynasties. More importantly still, the archetype of the Hellenistic preoccupation with the ideology of universality was Alexander himself, who, although arguably influenced by similar Achaemenid imperial ideologies that came before him, was perceived as the universal monarch *par excellence*. The continuation of the concern with this ideology, even well beyond the generation of Alexander's Successors, is perhaps to be understood as an evolution of the concern with gaining dominion over, or reuniting, Alexander's entire empire that had characterised much of the ideological discourse that developed in the period of the *Diadochi*.³² The broad territorial reach of Ptolemaic power, therefore, as conceived in Theocritus' *Encomium*, was itself the product of a broader concern with imitating and succeeding from the imperial rule of Alexander, and so attests to another dimension of Alexander's enduring relevance as a dynastic model.

This universalist model of Ptolemaic power endured well beyond Philadelphus' lifetime. A notable, counterfactual example is found in the Adulis inscription of Ptolemy III Euergetes, Philadelphus' successor. This inscription, just like Theocritus' *Encomium*, stresses proactive stewardship of patrimonial *basileia*, and gives another 'list' of lands inherited by Euergetes which corresponds closely, though not precisely, with Theocritus' own universalising 'list' of Philadelphus' domains.³³ These details confirm the presence of a highly mimetic scheme of continuous ideological inheritance, stemming from Alexander, at work in the Ptolemaic dynasty's self-construction. The counterfactuality inheres in the inscription's assertion of Euergetes' new conquests, which takes the form of another 'list', this time declaring military conquest and subsequent rule over effectively all Asia (as then construed), from the Hellespont

31 Generally, see Strootman, "Queen of Kings", 140–157.

32 See R. Strootman, "Men to Whose Rapacity Neither Sea Nor Mountain Sets a Limit: The Aims of the Diadochs", in *The Age of the Successors and the Creation of the Hellenistic Kingdoms (323–276 BC)*, ed. H. Hauben and A. Meeus (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 307–322.

33 *OGIS* 54, ll. 5–8: ... παραλαβὼν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς τὴν βασιλείαν Αἰγύπτου καὶ Λιβύης καὶ Συρίας καὶ Φοινίκης καὶ Κύπρου καὶ Λυκίας καὶ Καρίας καὶ τῶν Κυκλάδων νήσων ... ("having inherited from his father the kingship over Egypt, Libya, Syria, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Lycia, Caria, and the Cyclades islands ...").

to Bactria;³⁴ in other words, it declares victory over, and absorption of, the Ptolemies' great rival, the sprawling Seleucid kingdom. Such a vast and total conquest, needless to say, did not occur; but the ideology of territorial universality, at the expense of rivals to the Ptolemaic dynasty, is entirely in keeping with what we have seen advertised above in reference to Philadelphus' reign. Further manifestations of this ideology, as discussed in the final section of this chapter, can be found even in the age of the last Cleopatra, particularly (but not exclusively) in the infamous "Donations of Alexandria" of 34 BC, at which Cleopatra's lover, the powerful Roman magnate Marc Antony, ceremonially granted huge swathes of the eastern Mediterranean and Near East to Cleopatra and her children.³⁵

Theocritus' characterisation of the untouchable immensity of Ptolemaic wealth, in lines 95–120, is intrinsically connected to the implication of an illimitable territorial reach, both fundamentally projecting an unassailable superiority of position and vastness of power. Although representing the reality that Philadelphus was "probably the wealthiest man in the world" in his time,³⁶ the emphasis on economic primacy also ties in with phenomenon of a dynastic-specific filtration of Alexander's archetype that we have seen in relation to universal monarchy, inasmuch as it is also modelled on the vast income and dispersal of wealth in Alexander's reign. These had become significant in Alexander's ideological vocabulary as well as in practical aspects of his empire-running, since he became ruler of the lands once constituted by the Persian Empire, among which conspicuous redistribution of wealth, through practices such as gift-giving, had a long-embedded importance in a system of ruler-subject power relations, often functioning as hierarchical signifier and as a means

34 *OGIS* 54, ll. 13–20: ... κυριεύσας δὲ τῆς τε ἐντὸς Εὐφράτου χώρας πάσης καὶ Κιλικίας καὶ Παμφυλίας καὶ Ἰωνίας καὶ τοῦ Ἑλλησπόντου καὶ Θράκης καὶ τῶν δυνάμεων (καὶ) τῶν ἐν ταῖς χώραις ταύταις πασῶν καὶ ἐλεφάντων Ἰνδικῶν, καὶ τοὺς μονάρχους τοὺς ἐν τοῖς τόποις πάντας ὑπηκόους καταστήσας διέβη τὸν Εὐφράτην ποταμὸν καὶ τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν καὶ Βαβυλωνίαν καὶ Σουσιανὴν καὶ Περσίδα καὶ Μηδείαν καὶ τὴν λοιπὴν πᾶσαν ἕως Βακτριανῆς ὕφ' ἑαυτῷ ποιησάμενος ... ("Having become master of all territory this side of the Euphrates, and of Cilicia, Pamphylia, Ionia, the Hellespont, and Thrace, and of all the military forces in these territories and of Indian elephants, and having made all the monarchs in these lands his subjects, he crossed the river Euphrates, and Babylonia, Susiana, Persia, Media, and all the rest as far as Bactria he made his own ...").

35 See discussion at the end of this chapter.

36 J.G. Manning, *The Last Pharaohs: Egypt under the Ptolemies, 305–30 BC* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 125.

of engineering dependency on monarchic largesse.³⁷ Thus Philadelphus, like Alexander before, appropriately “would outweigh all other kings in wealth” (l. 95: “Ολβω μὲν πάντας κε καταβρίθαι βασιλῆας”), and “bestows much upon powerful kings, much upon cities, and much upon his noble companions” (ll. 110–111: πολλὸν δ’ ἰφθίμοισι δεδῶρηται βασιλεῦσι, πολλὸν δὲ πτολίεσσι, πολὺν δ’ ἀγαθοῖσιν ἑταίροις). Here we see a positive redirection away from the old Hellenic denigration of decadent oriental *tryphē* (“luxury”):³⁸ once signifying moral and social decay, now it embodied hierarchical superiority in a new world of like-titled *basileis* and constituted a productive beneficence, contributing to the construction of Philadelphus as the ideal of the good monarch.

The characterisation of Philadelphus in an Alexandrian light is crucially significant in the *Encomium*’s original performance context, probably the mid-late 270s, because the forward-looking dynastic scheme that is so emphasised throughout the poem creates the expectation for Philadelphus’ own incipient divinization, as successor to the divinized figures of Alexander and Ptolemy.³⁹ In perhaps 272/1, Philadelphus broke with contemporary norms regarding ruler cult by instituting a lifetime cult, for himself and his sister-wife Arsinoe as the *Theoi Adelphoi*, the “Sibling Gods”,⁴⁰ thus fulfilling the poem’s expectation in real terms. However, this was not simply another independent cult, but rather was integrated with the existent state-wide cult of Alexander discussed above, becoming, in sum, the cult of Alexander and the *Theoi Adelphoi*. This is the logical development of a trajectory of Alexander-association that we have seen represented in the *Encomium*:⁴¹ from symbolic founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty, participating in a mutual scheme of divinity with Ptolemy I, Alexander becomes an object of cultic veneration alongside the present-day monarch Philadelphus. Every sacrifice, every religious observance in that cult, therefore, invoked Alexander alongside Philadelphus, immersing the Ptolemaic monarchy in Alexander’s model in cult no less than in royal ideology.

37 See, *inter alia*, P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 316; L. Llewellyn-Jones, *King and Court Ancient Persia, 559 to 331 BCE* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 32.

38 See Briant, *Cyrus to Alexander*, 316.

39 See Klooster, *Poetry as Window and Mirror*, 229–233.

40 For a summary of this cult, with reference to earlier scholarship (particularly regarding date of inception), see S. Müller, *Das hellenistische Königspaar*, 262–266.

41 Cf. the suggestion that the *Encomium* functioned, in part, as a ‘kite-flyer’ for Philadelphus’ incipient divinization: G. Zanker, *Modes of Viewing in Hellenistic Poetry and Art* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press), 140.

Many of the above-discussed ideological constructions constellate in a single spectacular setting, namely in Philadelphus' staging of a grand *pompē*, a "procession" (or, rather, multiple processions under a unifying festive *conspectus*) which ran through the streets of Alexandria,⁴² probably in the 270s BC.⁴³ While in Callixenus' fragmentary account of the *pompē* the figure of Dionysus predominates,⁴⁴ both as a character within the spectacular setting and as the main focus of religious devotion, the procession(s) feature a striking multiplicity of greater than mortal figures, divine and divinized. Importantly, the figure of Alexander occupies a central position in some of the processional scenes: a statue of Alexander alongside statues of Ptolemy and personified *Arete* ("Virtue") at one point,⁴⁵ and at another an entire procession dedicated to Alexander, complete with a golden statue of the conqueror, alongside statues of Athena and Nike, is borne along by an elephant-drawn chariot.⁴⁶ Moreover, we see again the theme of universal monarchy, as following the passage of Alexander, Ptolemy, and *Arete*, there comes a statue of Corinth bedecked in a golden diadem—Corinth probably alluding to the *poleis* of peninsular Greece, via the historical institution of the League of Corinth—and women crowned in gold, dressed sumptuously and bearing the names of cities and towns in Ionia, the Aegean islands, and the coast of Asia Minor;⁴⁷ seemingly these were real persons, standing in for personifications of these states. The interweaving of Alexander's past in an international, forward-looking projection of contemporary Ptolemaic power is again indicative of the extent to which Ptolemaic

42 On the Grand Procession, see generally E. Rice, *The Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); Erskine, "Culture and Power", 34–48; D.J. Thompson, 'Philadelphus' Procession: Dynastic Power in a Mediterranean Context', in *Politics, Administration and Society in the Hellenistic and Roman World: Proceedings of the International Colloquium, Bertinoro, 19–24 July 1997*, ed. L. Mooren (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 365–388.

43 Dates offered have ranged between 282–262, at the coincidence with one staging of the Ptolemaieia festival (whose chronology is itself problematic); for the different possibilities, see V. Foertmeyer, "Dating the *Pompe* of Ptolemy II Philadelphos", *Historia* 37 (1988), 90–104; R.A. Hazzard, *The Imagination of a Monarchy: Studies in Ptolemaic Propaganda* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 30–31; A. Erskine, "Hellenistic Parades and Roman Triumphs", in *Rituals of Triumph in the Mediterranean World*, ed. A. Spalinger and J. Armstrong (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 46 with n. 27.

44 For Callixenus' account, see Athenaeus 5.25–36 [197c–203b]. Text, translation, and commentary can also be found in Rice, *Grand Procession*.

45 Athen. 5.33 [201d].

46 Athen. 5.34 [202a].

47 Athen. 5.34–35 [201d–e].

ideology was immersed in the conqueror's model. Rather like the themes seen already in Theocritus' *Encomium*, the procession "hammers out the message of Ptolemy's enormous wealth and power",⁴⁸ while simultaneously broadcasting an inseparable dynastic association with Alexander.

Epilogue: Alexander and the Endurance of Ptolemaic Ideology

Theocritus' *Encomium* evokes the wider Ptolemaic practice of emphasising Alexander as the dynasty's point of genesis, and it captures the extent to which Alexander functioned as a recurrent model in whose light the Ptolemaic monarchs presented their own kingships. The forward-looking and inherently dynastic nature of Alexander's use in Ptolemaic ideology, in which inter-generational assimilation from Alexander onwards underscored the royal family's legitimacy and continuing vitality, meant that the schemes developed by the early Ptolemies were inherently replicable, with new links on the dynastic chain easily incorporable into its established outlooks.

Ptolemaic ruler cult, for instance, began with Ptolemy's foundation of Alexander's posthumous cult, Philadelphus' institution of a posthumous cult for his parents as the *Theoi Soteres*, and then Philadelphus' development of lifetime cult for himself and his wife as the *Theoi Adelphoi*, itself joined with the existent Alexander-cult. This practice of dynastic divinization continued: the *Theoi Euergetai* ("Benefactor Gods", i.e. Ptolemy III and his wife), for instance, joined the cult of Alexander and the *Theoi Adelphoi* during the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes (r. 246–222),⁴⁹ solidifying the cult as a *locus* for emphasising a dynastic power that was rooted in Alexander himself. During the reign of perhaps Ptolemy IV Philopator (r. 221–204), the separate cult of the *Theoi Soteres*, founded by Philadelphus, was integrated with the burgeoning dynastic cult, thus resolving what had perhaps come to be perceived as an anomalous gap in the dynastic line between Alexander and Philadelphus; Ptolemy IV, in turn, added the *Theoi Philopatores* ("Father-Loving Gods", i.e. Ptolemy IV and his wife), and their son Ptolemy V Epiphanes (r. 204–181) inserted himself into the cult as *Theos Epiphanes Eucharistos* ("God Manifest and Beneficent").⁵⁰ Alexander's position as dynastic founder was thus reified through the continuous addition of new links on the family line, embedding and making traditional the

48 Erskine, "Culture and Power", 44.

49 See e.g. *OGIS* 56.

50 See e.g. *OGIS* 90.

ideology that had been established in the dynasty's earliest generations. The immersiveness of the Ptolemaic appropriation of Alexander, therefore, only increased over time. Ptolemaic dynastic rule continued to be projected as fundamentally co-extensive with its Alexandrian roots. Octavian's pointed refusal to consider viewing the Ptolemies' remains when viewing Alexander's body, adduced at the start of this chapter, is striking when considered against this ideological backdrop.

Even in the reign of Cleopatra VII, the last scion of the Ptolemaic dynasty, we see the animation and redolence of Alexander's model and the modes of engagement with it established by Ptolemy and by Philadelphus. Cleopatra's reign was characterised by a conspicuous display of wealth, in line with the tangible projection of power and position brought out so forcefully in Theocritus' Alexander-derived depiction of Philadelphus' world-mastery. Particularly in her attempts at courting Mark Antony after the demise of Julius Caesar, Cleopatra is recorded to have sailed to meet him in a barge with a gilded poop, purple sails, and rowed with silver oars, herself reclining under a golden canopy, surrounded by the burning of costly incense; Antony's own attempts to project wealth and power, perhaps to combat Cleopatra's implied assumption of superiority, fall flat in the face of Cleopatra's wielding of a well-practised dynastic tradition.⁵¹ Moreover, Cleopatra assumed the connected ideology of territorial universality, reportedly speaking during embassy-meetings in the tongues of widely different peoples—Ethiopians, Troglodytes, Hebrews, Arabians, Syrians, Medes, and Parthians, and apparently many more besides—so arrogating to herself an implicit position of rulership over all these peoples.⁵² The infamous Donations of Alexander, in 34 BC, see many of these ideological constructs reconverge in a spectacular setting, in which Antony ceremonially bestows upon Cleopatra's children wide-ranging dominion over lands across the eastern Mediterranean and Near East.⁵³ Even the names of the children borne by Cleopatra with Antony's parentage, namely Alexander and Ptolemy, affirm the Ptolemaic dynasty's foundational symbolic roots and the ideological identity it had projected since its earliest generations.

Theocritus' *Encomium* presents in poetically coded form some of the core uses of Alexander that would continue to persist in the ideological self-expression of the Ptolemaic dynasty. Though subject to adaptable formulation, the fundamentally static nature of these ideological constructs is a peculiarity.

⁵¹ For this scene see Plut. *Ant.* 25–26.

⁵² See Plut. *Ant.* 27.

⁵³ See Plut. *Ant.* 54; Dio. 49.40–41. For discussion, see Strootman, "Queen of Kings".

Nevertheless, this inherently continuous sequence of ideological inheritances is an appropriate vehicle for conveying in general terms the dynastic robustness and vitality that individual points of imagery seek to express in more specific terms. The entrenchment of the constructed position of Alexander as symbolic founder, through ideological repetition over the generations of the Ptolemaic monarchy, not only meant that a potential ideological overhaul would cut to the core of the central Ptolemaic image of dynastic legitimacy, but also meant that the tradition gained increasing strength and force over time, gaining a venerable status in its increasing antiquity. In this, the Ptolemaic use of Alexander comes full circle: as Alexander, and his own forebears, had repeatedly engaged in making the claim of the Argead family's ultimate descent from Heracles, so Ptolemy, and his successors, embedded the idea of symbolic and genetic descent from Alexander; Alexander thus comes to occupy the same role in the Ptolemaic dynastic myth-history that Heracles had in the Argead. Theocritus' vignette of the heavenly companionship of Ptolemy, Alexander, and Heracles, therefore, represents not just a specific ideological claim but also the symbolic genealogy behind the Ptolemaic reception of Alexander.

At this point, as has been discussed in the opening of this chapter, Octavian cultivated the inception of his own symbolic inheritance, borrowing from the Ptolemies' model while simultaneously excluding the Ptolemies themselves. The long-lived Roman use of Alexander as a dynastic model, indebted in many ways to Octavian's actions in 30 BC, suggests that although the Ptolemies themselves died out with their last monarch Cleopatra, the mode of the Ptolemaic reception of Alexander continued to live on in the hands of the new Mediterranean superpower.

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Alexander after Alexander: Macedonian Propaganda and Historical Memory in Ptolemy and Aristobulus' Writings*

Giuseppe Squillace

Some forty years ago, Marta Sordi, in four very interesting workshops, drew attention to the dynamics of propaganda in the ancient world, its elaboration system, transmission channels, recipients and effects on public opinion.¹ In her introduction to the theme *I canali della propaganda nel mondo antico* (1976) Sordi and other speakers remarked—from different points of view and on the basis of different sources (literary, numismatic, epigraphic, archaeological, and papyrical) on the meaning of propaganda, its importance in building consent, and its channels of diffusion.²

Marta Sordi's lecture has been not always taken into consideration by scholars. Often—perhaps too often—the word 'propaganda' is used in a generic and inappropriate way to define a theme or connote a tendentious notice useful to the interests of a politician, a political group, a tyrant, a king or an emperor. Generally little or no attention is devoted to the precise meaning of 'propaganda', that is—as Marta Sordi remarked—"not the simple dissemination of a notice, but every gesture, act, manifesto, slogan, speech, writing, image, artistic work that aims to exert a psychological pressure on the public opinion, to credit or discredit an idea, a person, a product, a policy or religion",³ or to the

* I would like to thank my colleague and friend Kenneth Moore for inviting me to contribute to this volume, and for his helpful support. Except where indicated differently, all the dates are BCE.

1 *Propaganda e persuasione occulta nell'antichità*, a cura di Marta Sordi (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1974); *Storiografia e propaganda*, a cura di Marta Sordi (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1975); *I canali della propaganda nel mondo antico*, a cura di Marta Sordi (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1976); *Aspetti dell'opinione pubblica nel mondo antico*, a cura di Marta Sordi (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1978).

2 Sordi, "Introduzione", in *I canali della propaganda nel mondo antico*, 3–27.

3 Sordi, "Impostazione del problema", in *Propaganda e persuasione occulta nell'antichità*, 5.

components of a propagandistic act such as author/addresser of the message, recipients, dissemination channels, aims, and immediate effect in terms of consent.⁴

Regarding Alexander the Great and the propagandistic themes that characterized, justified and followed his Asiatic campaign, there is a complete misunderstanding that leads to overlap, and in many cases to identify, the historical account of the sources—it is posthumous and has encomiastic aims—with the propaganda *tout court*.

As is well known, the writings of the contemporary historians who narrated Alexander's Asiatic campaign are all fragmentary. They are quoted by late sources as Diodorus, Curtius Rufus, Plutarch, Arrian and Trogus-Justin. These authors, influenced by contemporary cultural paradigms, in many cases modified or altered the original contents of the sources they quoted.⁵ Considering this, it is problematic to reconstruct the course of some episodes, and it is more problematic, and sometimes impossible, to intercept the authentic themes of Alexander's propaganda coined personally by the Macedonian king and/or his entourage and aimed at justifying military decisions and obtaining the consent of army and allies. Given these late sources, in only a small number of cases and for a few episodes of the Asiatic enterprise can we intercept an authentic propagandistic act, recognize a message and understand its meaning and aim. It happens especially when a definite gesture is accompanied by an explicit message; shows clearly an addresser, a recipient, a means/channel of dissemination/diffusion, and an aim; and displays a manipulation of the facts through a 'truth' useful to the interests at the time. In many cases, divergent traditions

4 On this topic, see e.g. Walter Lippmann, *L'opinione pubblica*, (1921) Italian translation by Cesare Mannucci (Roma: Donzelli, 2000); *Mediare la realtà. Mass media, sistema politico e opinione pubblica*, a cura di Sara Bentivegna (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2004); Sandro Landi, *Stampa, censura e opinione pubblica in età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2011); Paola Stringa, *Blogdemocrazia. Come si forma oggi l'opinione pubblica* (Roma: Carocci, 2011).

5 On the historians of Alexander see: Lionel Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (Chicago, 1960. Repr. Chicago: Scholars Press, 1983); Mario Attilio Levi, *Introduzione ad Alessandro Magno*. (Milano: Cisalpino-La Goliardica, 1977); Paul Pédech, *Historiens compagnons d'Alexandre* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1984); Albert Brian Bosworth, *From Arrian to Alexander. Studies in Historical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Nicholas G.L. Hammond, *Sources for Alexander the Great: An Analysis of Plutarch's Life and Arrian's Anabasis Alexandrou* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). More recently see also Andrea Zambrini, *The Historians of Alexander the Great*, in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, ed. John Marincola (Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World), (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 210–220; and Sabine Müller, *Alexander, Makedonien und Persien* (Berlin: Trafo, 2014), 29–113.

allow us to discover a propagandistic message or act. Because of their different perspectives, they permit us to unveil the stratagem and uncover the deception.

Alexander's propaganda is based on precise acts, symbolical gestures, and messages coined or suggested by the king and re-launched in different ways by his entourage.⁶ They all should persuade not only the closest addressees, his generals and army, but also the more remote Greeks and Macedonians of the homeland.

Ptolemy and Aristobulus

If propaganda was the best means to obtain consent, then Ptolemy and Aristobulus, who followed Alexander into Asia and were key members of his staff, sometimes preserved in their historical works the propagandistic messages coined and employed by the king. Only fragments survived of Ptolemy and Aristobulus' writings.⁷ Many of them are quoted by Arrian, who, in his preface, explicitly declared his use of these historians in composing the *Anabasis of Alexander*. He chose Ptolemy and Aristobulus because—he asserts—they both followed Alexander into Asia and Ptolemy in particular, as king, was required to tell the truth.⁸

6 On these themes and Alexander's consensus strategies, see: Giuseppe Squillace, Basileis o Tyrannoi. *Filippo II e Alessandro Magno tra opposizione e consenso* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2004), *passim*; Giuseppe Squillace, "Propaganda macedone e spedizione asiatica. Gli oikeioi logoi di Alessandro Magno alle truppe.", *Les Études Classiques* 72.2 (2004), 217–234; Giuseppe Squillace, "Propaganda macedone e spedizione asiatica. Responsi oracolari e vaticini nella spedizione di Alessandro tra verità e manipolazione (nota a Polyæn, *Strat.* IV 3.14)", *Les Études Classiques* 73.4 (2005), 303–318; Giuseppe Squillace, "Consensus Strategies under Philip and Alexander. The Revenge Theme", in *Philip II and Alexander the Great. Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*, eds. Elizabeth Carney and Daniel Ogden. Proceedings of the conference, Clemson (USA) 2008 (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 69–80; Giuseppe Squillace, "Religio instrumentum imperii. Strategie propagandistiche di Filippo II e Alessandro Magno", in *Spazio sacro e potere politico in Grecia e nel Vicino Oriente*, a cura di Lia Raffaella Cresci. Atti del convegno, Genova 2013 (Roma: Aracne, 2014), 219–238.

7 The fragments were collected by Jacoby: Ptol. *FGrHist* 138; Aristob. *FGrHist* 139 = *BNJ* 139.

8 Arr. *An. Proem.* 1–2 = Aristob. *FGrHist* 139, T 6 = *BNJ* 139, T 6 and Ptol. *FGrHist* 138, T 1; see Albert Brian Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*. Vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), comm. ad loc.; Frances Pownall, "Aristoboulos of Kassandrea (139)", in *Brill's New Jacoby*, ed. Ian Worthington, (Leiden: Brill, 2013. Online), comm. ad loc.

Ptolemy was a close friend of Alexander from youth. He followed the king into Asia and was an important general during the military campaign, then from 323 administered Egypt as governor and from 305 as king.⁹ It is a view widely shared that Ptolemy started composing his historical work focused on the Asiatic enterprise when he was old: perhaps it happened shortly after 306,¹⁰ or later.¹¹ In his work he praised Alexander and sometimes did not hesitate to confirm the king's propagandistic messages, inserting them into his historical account and showing them as unique truth. He minimized the difficulties of some episodes; preserved in many cases a positive image of his king, protecting him from all types of charges even when his guilt was evident (e.g. Philotas and Parmenion's execution, and Cleitus' murder); and showed himself beside Alexander, pointing out his own merits during the Asiatic campaign.¹²

Regarding Aristobulus, the sources narrate that he followed Alexander into Asia but started composing his historical work after 301—likely shortly after 298 and Cassander's death—when he was very old (84 years).¹³ As with Ptole-

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- 9 On Ptolemy, see Helmut Berve, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischen Grundlage*. Vol. 11. (München 1926, Repr. Hildesheim-Zürich-New York: Georg Olms, 1999), nr. 668; and Waldemar Heckel, *Who's Who in the Age of Alexander the Great. Prosopography of Alexander's Empire* (Malden, MA-London: Blackwell Publishing Co., 2006), 238; further bibliography *infra*.
 - 10 Pédech, *Historiens compagnons d'Alexandre*, 237; Zambrini, *The Historians of Alexander the Great*, 217.
 - 11 See Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great*, 193, but also Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. 11 B. Kommentar (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 499; Berve, *Das Alexanderreich*, 11, nr. 668; Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*. Vol. 1., 23; Heckel, *Who's Who*, 238. On the contrary, Levi (*Introduzione ad Alessandro Magno*, 50–52) supposed the years between 323 (Alexander's death) and 306 (Ptolemy proclaimed himself as king of Egypt); Badian (Ernst Badian, *Studies in Greek and Roman Histories* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964): 258) assumed after 321; Errington (E. Malcolm Errington, "Bias in Ptolemy's History of Alexander", *The Classical Quarterly* 19 (1969), 241) after 320.
 - 12 On the features of Ptolemy's writing, see: Berve, *Das Alexanderreich*, 11, nr. 668; Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great*, 188–211; Levi, *Introduzione ad Alessandro Magno*, 43–65; Pédech, *Historiens compagnons d'Alexandre*, 215–329; Heckel, *Who's Who*, 235–238; Zambrini, *The Historians of Alexander the Great*, 217; Müller, *Alexander*, 78–90.
 - 13 Arr. *An.* VII 18.5 = Aristob. *FGrHist* 139, F 54 = *BNJ* 139, F 54; [Lucianus], *Macr.* 22 = Aristob. *FGrHist* 139, T 3 = *BNJ* 139, T 3; see Pownall, "Aristoboulos of Kassandreia (139)", comm. ad loc. On Aristobulus: Berve, *Das Alexanderreich*, 11, nr. 121; Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great*, 150–187; Peter A. Brunt, "Notes on Aristobulus of Kassandreia", *The Classical Quarterly* 24 (1974), 65–69; Levi, *Introduzione ad Alessandro Magno*, 65–83; Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary*, Vol. 1, 27; Pédech, *Historiens compagnons*

my, Aristobulus likely opposed the policy of Cassander, who had been hostile to Alexander's memory and family, and championed in his work Alexander's image, maintaining a respectful and apologetic attitude towards his king and justifying his actions in many circumstances.¹⁴

Although the fragmentary status does not permit us to know exactly the contents and structure of Ptolemy and Aristobulus' works, nevertheless they dealt mainly with the Asiatic campaign. Despite the fact that both historians, wherever possible, showed Alexander in a positive light by sometimes neglecting or altering the truth, they do not always give identical versions of the same episode. Such is the case with the capture of the seventh Sogdian fortress, on which they report two different and opposing versions. According to Ptolemy, Alexander conquered it after the surrender of the inhabitants;¹⁵ according to Aristobulus, the king, after taking it by force, massacred the people.¹⁶ Such is the case too with the campaign in Sogdiana against Spitamenes that saw a massacre of the Macedonian troops. Ptolemy—which Arrian does not mention expressly—blamed the Macedonian generals Andromachus and Caranus, not Alexander, whom he did not mention in his account.¹⁷ On the contrary, Aristobulus, despite pointing out the inability of Andromachus, Caranus and Menedemus, who did not accept responsibility for guiding the troops, nevertheless named Alexander, who did not assign clearly the role of every commander.¹⁸ If in these two episodes Ptolemy safeguarded Alexander's name, in other occasions Aristobulus vigorously defended the king. So the historian of Cassandreia praised Alexander for magnanimity and respect toward Darius's

d'Alexandre, 331–405; Heckel, *Who's Who*, 46; Zambrini, *The Historians of Alexander the Great*, 218–219; Angela Moretti, "Introduzione ad Aristobulo di Cassandrea", in *Tradizione e trasmissione degli storici greci frammentari*, 11, a cura di Virgilio Costa, Atti del Terzo Workshop Internazionale, Roma 2011 (Tivoli: Tored, 2012), 209–235; Pownall, "Aristoboulos of Kassandreia (139)", (*Biographical Essay*); Müller, *Alexander*, 95–98.

14 On the features of Aristobulus' writing: Berve, *Das Alexanderreich*, 11, nr. 121; Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great*, 150; Levi, *Introduzione ad Alessandro Magno*, 65–83; Pédech, *Historiens compagnons d'Alexandre*, 331–405; Heckel, *Who's Who*, 46; Zambrini, *The Historians of Alexander the Great*, 218; Müller, *Alexander*, 95–98.

15 Arr. *An.* IV 3.5 = Ptol. *FGrHist* 138, F 15. See also Curt. VII 6.17–23, whose version reflects Aristobulus' account: see Pownall, "Aristoboulos of Kassandreia (139)", comm. ad loc.

16 Arr. *An.* IV 3.5 = Aristob. *FGrHist* 139, F 26 = *BNJ* 139, F 26; see Pownall, "Aristoboulos of Kassandreia (139)", comm. ad loc.

17 Arr. *An.* IV 5.2–9.

18 Arr. *An.* IV 6.1–2 = Aristob. *FGrHist* 139, F 27 = *BNJ* 139, F 27; see Pownall, "Aristoboulos of Kassandreia (139)", comm. ad loc.

family imprisoned after the battle of Issus;¹⁹ exonerated him completely from the murder of Cleitus, who had wronged the king, causing a violent reaction;²⁰ and cleared him of responsibility for Callisthenes' death.²¹

We can remark that, because Ptolemy and Aristobulus wrote some or many years after Alexander's death, the propagandistic messages had acquired an ideological effect and lost their convincing impact by the time the two historians were composing their writings. Nevertheless sometimes slogans, manipulations, stratagems, and devices infiltrated into their narratives, strongly conditioned them and, in some cases, preventing a correct understanding of events. Even if this procedure is not always easy to establish, propaganda becomes historical memory in two episodes: in 333 when Alexander came to Gordium and tried to loose the famous knot, and in 327 when Callisthenes died. We must consider these and investigate what role Ptolemy and Aristobulus initially played in supporting Alexander's propaganda and diffusing royal messages in the aftermath of the events, then in transforming the ideological messages in historical memory into their writings composed many years later.

Alexander's Visit to Gordium

In 333, after the battle of Granicus and the success against the Persians, Alexander freed the Greek cities of Asia Minor and went to Phrygia. He stopped at Gordium, where there was the chariot of King Gordius. According to an ancient prophecy, whoever loosened the knot that tied the chariot would rule over Asia.²²

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- 19 Aristob. *FGrHist* 139, F 10 = *BNJ* 139, F 10; see Pownall, "Aristoboulos of Kassandreia (139)", comm. ad loc.
 - 20 Aristob. *FGrHist* 139, F 29 = *BNJ* 139, F 29; see Pownall, "Aristoboulos of Kassandreia (139)", comm. ad loc. On the episode: Elizabeth Carney, "The Death of Clitus", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 22 (1981), 149–160; Heckel, *Who's Who*, 86–87.
 - 21 Aristob. *FGrHist* 139, F 33 = *BNJ* 139, F 33; Ptol. *FGrHist* 138, F 17. Both fragments are in Arr. *An.* IV 14.3; on the episode, see *infra*.
 - 22 There is a wide bibliography on the episode. It is enough to mention: Ernest A. Fredricksmeyer, "Alexander, Midas and the Oracle of Gordion", *Classical Philology* 56 (1961), 160–168; Peter Frei, "Der Wagen von Gordion", *Museum Helveticum* 29 (1972), 110–123; Lynn E. Roller, "Midas and the Gordian Knot", *Classical Antiquity* 3.2 (1984), 256–271; Brendan Burke, "Anatolian Origins of the Gordian Knot Legend", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 42 (2001), 255–261; Michael Zahrnt, "Alexander in Gordion und die Entstehung einer Legende", in *Ithake*. Festschrift für Jörg Schäfer zum 75. Geburtstag am 25. April 2001, Hrsg. Stephanie Böhm and Klaus Valtin von Eickstedt (Würzburg: Ergon, 2001), 203–206;

Plutarch, Arrian, Curtius Rufus, Trogus-Justin and Marsyas of Pella or Philippi all refer to the episode,²³ but if we compare the different traditions, we can remark that Plutarch and Arrian both mention their sources, unlike Curtius Rufus and Trogus-Justin. Specifically Plutarch and Arrian know two contrasting versions: according to the first one, Alexander cut the tangle of knots that fastened the chariot with his sword, but claimed he untied it. According to the second, the king loosened the knot in keeping with the prophecy. Of the two versions, Curtius Rufus and Trogus-Justin relate only the first.²⁴ Plutarch and Arrian do not identify the source of the first version, reporting only reported that many narrated it.²⁵ The second they assigned to Aristobulus.²⁶

We can infer from the different traditions that Alexander immediately intended to capitalize on the ideological vigour of the prophecy and its propagandistic forcefulness. Informed about the prophecy of kingship connected to the chariot, he crossed into Phrygia during his march East, intentionally went to Gordium and ascended to the acropolis, where the ancient royal palace was. As Arrian indicates, he aimed to see the chariot and its knot.²⁷

If the sources agree that, according to the prophecy, whoever loosened the knot would rule over Asia,²⁸ Curtius Rufus infers that, when Alexander elected to try it, he walked into the temple alone. Outside many Phrygians and Macedonians waited for the result (*circa regem erat et Phrygum turba et Macedonum, illa expectatione suspensa, haec sollicita ex temeraria regis fiducia*).²⁹ Arrian and Curtius Rufus point out the consequences of failure: according to Arrian, it would produce anxiety in the army (μή τινα καὶ τοῦτο ἐς τοὺς πολλοὺς κίνησιν

Squillace, Basileis o Tyrannoi, 144–147; Squillace, “Propaganda macedone e spedizione asiatica. Responsi oracolari e vaticini”, 312–313.

23 Plu. *Alex.* 18.1–4; Arr. *An.* II 3; Curt. III 1.14–18; Just. XI 7; Marsyas of Pella or Philippi *FGrHist* 136, F 4, *ap.* Schol. Eur. *Hipp.* 671.

24 Because of its fragmentary nature, we cannot know to what version Marsyas of Pella or Philippi referred: Marsyas *FGrHist* 136, F 4, *ap.* Schol. Eurip. *Hipp.* 671.

25 Plu. *Alex.* 18.3: [...] οἱ μὲν οὖν πολλοὶ φασι [...]; Arr. *An.* II 3.7: [...] οἱ μὲν λέγουσιν [...].

26 Aristob. *FGrHist* 139, F 7a–b = *BNJ* 139, F 7a–b, *ap.* Plu. *Alex.* 18.4 and Arr. *An.* II 3.7.

27 Arr. *An.* II 3.1.

28 Plutarch, Justin, and the Scoliaist to Euripides (who quotes Marsyas of Pella or Philippi's fragment) all mention clearly 'the kingship of Asia': Plu. *Alex.* 18.2–3: [...] ὡς τῷ λύσαντι τὸν δεσμὸν εἰμαρται βασιλεῖ γενέσθαι τῆς οἰκουμένης, [...]; Just. XI 7.4–5: [...] *si quis solvisset, eum tota Asia regnaturum* [...]; Schol. Eur. *Hipp.* 671 = Marsyas *FGrHist* 136, F 4: [...] βασιλεύσειν τῆς Ἀσίας, [...]. More generally Curtius Rufus and Arrian talked about 'the rule over Asia': Curt. III 1.16: [...] *Asiae potiturum, qui inexplicabile vinculum solvisset*, [...]; Arr. *An.* II 3.6: [...] ἄρξαι τῆς Ἀσίας. [...].

29 Curt. III 1.17.

ἐργάσῃται);³⁰ according to Curtius Rufus, it would be read as a negative omen (*ne in omen verteretur irritum inceptum*).³¹

We can read in Arrian the propagandistic aspect of Alexander's gesture. Arrian writes that the Macedonian king, because he could not loosen the tangle of knots, cut them with a sword, but claimed he had loosened them (λελύσθαι ἔφη). His version was credited, first by his closest friends, who believed that the king was perfectly successful (οἱ ἄμφ' αὐτὸν ὥς τοῦ λογίου τοῦ ἐπὶ τῇ λύσει τοῦ δεσμοῦ ξυμβεβηκότος), then by thunder and lightning bolts in the night, and finally by the public sacrifices to the gods. Alexander offered them the day after to thank the gods who—he asserted—sent him some signals (σημεῖα) and showed the way to loosen the knot (τοῦ δεσμοῦ τὴν λύσιν).³²

This is a clear example of 'propaganda fabrication'. The message was personally coined by Alexander, who manipulated the truth and showed a failure as a success. Immediately in front of the Phrygians and Macedonians, who waited outside of the temple, and a day after that in front of the army, through the sacrifices to the gods, he explicitly claimed to have loosened the knot and fulfilled the prophecy. He intended to avoid anxiety in the army (ἐς τοὺς πολλοὺς κίνησιν), but also (or above all) to reinforce cohesion and consent on the eve of a new and strenuous campaign against the Persians. Loosening the knot and acquiring a prophecy that promised the kingship/power over Asia, Alexander prefigured a new success over the Persians, who were more organized and numerous than at Granicus and potentially able to defeat the Macedonian army.³³

First Alexander's closest friends—i.e. his entourage—credited and diffused the positive and favourable message within the army. Then Alexander, through the public sacrifices to the gods, officially repeated the message, displaying it as the 'unique truth'.³⁴

30 Arr. *An.* II 3.7.

31 Curt. III 1.17.

32 Arr. *An.* II 3.7–8.

33 Marta Sordi, "L'orazione pseudodemostenica "Sui patti con Alessandro" e l'atteggiamento dei Greci prima di Issò", in *Alessandro Magno tra storia e mito*, a cura di Marta Sordi (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1984), 23–30.

34 Three times in few lines Arrian employs the verb 'to loose' (λύω) or nouns linked with it (λύσις): Arr. *An.* II 3.7–8.

Callisthenes' Death in Ptolemy and Aristobulus

Along with the Gordian knot, the tradition about Callisthenes' death is also controversial and conflicting.³⁵ As is well known, Callisthenes died in 327 after he had been involved in the Pages' conspiracy against Alexander.³⁶ In this case too Ptolemy and Aristobulus (both in Arrian) relate a parallel version fully supporting Alexander: they point out the charges against the historian and designate him as the authentic leader and author of the conspiracy.³⁷ It is Arrian who unveils the manipulation when he indicates that a non-specific many (πολλοί) relate that Alexander believed in the charges against Callisthenes because he long hated the historian, and Callisthenes was a close friend of Hermolaus, chief of the conspirators.³⁸ We can therefore infer, on the one hand, that Ptolemy and Aristobulus defended Alexander in charging Callisthenes, and on the other that a tradition reported by 'many' attributed to the king all of the responsibility.

In a passage immediately subsequent, Arrian takes from other sources, which he once again does not specify (ἤδη δέ τινες καὶ τάδε ἀνέγραψαν), the charges of Hermolaus against Alexander. Hermolaus blamed the king for Philotas, Parmenion and Cleitus' deaths, for adopting the Persian traditions, for introducing the *proskynesis*, for the excesses during the symposia, and confessed that the conspiracy was aimed at restoring the freedom of the Macedonians.³⁹ Because Arrian retrieved the charges against Alexander from some unspecified sources, evidently he was not able to find a trace of these in Ptolemy and Aristobulus, who were his main sources, which, as he declared in the preface of *Anabasis of Alexander*, he followed most of the time.⁴⁰ Ptolemy and

35 Aristob. *FGrHist* 139, F 33 = *BNJ* 139, F 33; Ptol. *FGrHist* 138, F 17. The two fragments are in Arr. *An.* IV 14.3; see Pownall, "Aristoboulos of Kassandreia (139)", comm. ad loc. On Callisthenes' death, see, e.g.: Luisa Prandi, *Callistene: uno storico tra Aristotele e i re macedoni* (Milano: Jaca, 1985), 29–33; David Golan, "The Fate of a Court Historian, Callisthenes", *Athenaeum* 66 (1988), 99–120; Squillace, *Basileis o Tyrannoi*, 88–90.

36 On the episode, see Squillace, *Basileis o Tyrannoi*, 86–87; Edward M. Anson, *Alexander the Great. Themes and Issues* (London-New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 40–41; Müller, *Alexander*, 232–233; Ian Worthington, *By the Spear. Philip II, Alexander the Great, and the Rise and Fall of the Macedonian Empire* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 233–235.

37 Arr. *An.* IV 14.1 = Aristob. *FGrHist* 139, F 31 = *BNJ* 139, F 25 and Ptol. *FGrHist* 138, F 16.

38 Arr. *An.* IV 14.1.

39 Arr. *An.* IV 14.2. We find analogous charges in Curt. VIII 7.

40 Arr. *An. Incipit* 1–2 = Aristob. *FGrHist* 139, T 6 = *BNJ* 139, T 6 and Ptol. *FGrHist* 138, T 1.

Aristobulus likely remained silent on the charges of Hermolaus against Alexander and only related Callisthenes' responsibility in order to preserve the king's name in their historical works and to justify the historian's death.

If Ptolemy and Aristobulus followed a common guideline about Callisthenes' responsibilities regarding the conspiracy, on the contrary they were in sharp disagreement about his death. Quoting the two versions, Arrian indicates that, according to Aristobulus, Callisthenes died from disease (νόσῳ τελευτῆσαι); while according to Ptolemy, after being tortured, he was executed by hanging (στρεβλωθέντα καὶ κρεμασθέντα θέντα ἀποθανεῖν).⁴¹ We find Ptolemy's version in Curtius Rufus too, according to which Callisthenes died after being tortured (*tortus interiit*). His murder (*caedes*), Curtius continues, caused a highly negative reaction (*maior invidia*) amongst the Greeks who were outraged at Alexander for torturing and executing a man such as Callisthenes who was renowned for his great moral excellence.⁴²

It is quite revealing also that Arrian, after referring to Ptolemy and Aristobulus' versions, signals that there were also other accounts about Callisthenes' death. Even if he knew, he chose to omit them.⁴³ We find one of these in Plutarch. It was related by Chares of Mytilene, chamberlain (εἰσαγγελεύς) of Alexander and author of a work titled *Histories of Alexander*. According to Chares, Callisthenes remained imprisoned for seven months. Alexander wanted to bring him to Greece where the *synedrion* of Corinth would put the historian on trial in the presence of Aristotle. Only the accidental death of Callisthenes prevented it: the historian died for obesity and *phthiriasis*.⁴⁴ Therefore, Chares' version completely freed Alexander from blame. Likely it reflected exactly the version perpetuated in Alexander's court, of which Chares as *eisaggeleus* was a very authoritative member.⁴⁵

41 Arr. An. IV 14.3 = Aristob. *FGrHist* 139, F 33 = *BNJ* 139, F 33 and Ptol. *FGrHist* 138, F 17.

42 Curt. VIII 8.22 (= Callisth. *FGrHist* 124, T 17): *Itaque nullius caedes maiorem apud Graecos Alexandro excitavit invidiam, quod praeditum optimis moribus artibusque, [...]*. On Callisthenes' fate we find other traditions of uncertain origin. According to them, Callisthenes died from hunger and cold in a cavern; from phthiriasis, tortured and executed by Alexander: Callisth. *FGrHist* 124, TT 18a–f; see Prandi, *Callistene*, 30–33.

43 Arr. An. IV 14.4: [...] πολλά δὲ καὶ ἄλλα ὑπὲρ τούτων αὐτῶν ἄλλοι ἄλλως ἀφηγήσαντο, ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ ταῦτα ἀποχρώντα ἔστω ἀναγεγραμμένα. [...]

44 Plu. Alex. 55.9 = Chares *FGrHist* 125, F 15 = F 11 Cagnazzi: [...] Χάρης δὲ μετὰ τὴν σύλληψιν ἐπτά μῆνας φυλάττεσθαι δεδεμένον, ὥς ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ κριθεῖη παρόντος Ἀριστοτέλους, ἐν αἷς δὲ ἡμέραις Ἀλέξανδρος ἐτρώθη περὶ τὴν Ἰνδίαν, ἀποθανεῖν ὑπέρπαχυν γενόμενον καὶ φθειριάσαντα. [...]. See also Plu. *Sull.* 36.5; Suid. s.v. Καλλισθένης Δημοτίμου (= Callisth. *FGrHist* 124, T 1; 18d).

45 Plu. Alex. 46.1–2 = Chares *FGrHist* 125, T 2; F 12 = T 3; F 4 Cagnazzi: [...] καὶ Χάρης ὁ εἰσαγγε-

Therefore, regarding Callisthenes' death, Aristobulus initially spreads, then accepts and transmits Chares' version as historical memory. As chamberlain, chief of the royal chancery and one of the closest figures to Alexander, Chares coined it, perhaps personally, on behalf of his king, diffused it throughout the army and then related it in his writing. This version—which it is not reckless to label the 'official version'—freed Alexander from blame for Callisthenes' death, which was caused by natural factors, and put him in a favourable light because his intention was to bring Callisthenes before the *synedrion* of the Greeks at Corinth in the presence of Aristotle: only an accidental event such as a disease prevented it.⁴⁶ If Aristobulus recalls the 'official version', on the contrary Ptolemy attributed clearly to Alexander all the responsibility and classified Callisthenes' death as a proper execution ordered by the king.⁴⁷ This version is reinforced by Plutarch who recalls a letter of Alexander's to Antipater, his regent in Europe, in which the king declared his will to 'punish' the sophist

γέλεις [...]. On the Chares' writing: Chares *FGrHist* 125, FF 1–5; 13 = FF 5; 8; 9; 12; 13; 17; 18 Cagnazzi. On Chares of Mytilene: Berve, *Das Alexanderreich*, II, nr. 820; Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great*, 50–61; Levi, *Introduzione ad Alessandro Magno*, 28–33; Heckel, *Who's Who*, 83; Müller, *Alexander*, 71–77; Silvana Cagnazzi, *Carete di Mitilene. Testimonianze e frammenti* (Tivoli: Tored, 2015). The word εἰσαγγέλεις has been interpreted in various ways: as "königlicher Kammerherr" (Berve, *Das Alexanderreich*, II, nr. 820); "der Hofmarschall und Zeremonienmeister" (Jacoby, *Fragmente*, II B. *Kommentar*, 433); "Chamberlain and Officer in charge of audiences" (Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great*, 50); "Segretario particolare o Capo di gabinetto" (Levi, *Introduzione ad Alessandro Magno*, 29); "Royal Usher" (Heckel, *Who's Who*, 83); "Zeremonienmeister oder Protokollchef" (Müller, *Alexander*, 71); "Ciambellano" (Cagnazzi, *Carete*, 83).

46 Some scholars accept Chares' version. See, Levi, *Introduzione ad Alessandro Magno*, 31; 54; Prandi 1985, 33; and also, but not categorically, Jacoby, *Fragmente*, II B. *Kommentar*, 435; and Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great*, 56, nt. 26.

47 Some scholars believes plausible Ptolemy's version. See: James R. Hamilton, *Plutarch. Alexander. A Commentary*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 156; James R. Hamilton, *Alexander the Great* (London: Hutchinson, 1973), 107–108; Ernst Badian. "The Deification of Alexander the Great", in *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honor of Charles F. Edson*, ed. Herry J. Dell (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1981), 49–51; Ernst Badian, "Conspiracies", in *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction*, eds. Albert Brian Bosworth and Elizabeth Baynham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 72; Albert Brian Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*, Vol. II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 100; Worthington, *By the Spear*, 234; not so evidently also Gordon Shrimpton, "The Callisthenes Enigma", in *Greece, Macedon and Persia*, eds. Timothy Howe, E. Edward Garvin and Graham Wrighton (Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2015), 115. On the different traditions emerged on Callisthenes' horrible end: Callisth. *FGrHist* 124, TT 18a–f; see Prandi, *Callistene*, 30–33.

Callisthenes (τὸν δὲ σοφιστὴν ἐγὼ κολάσω), together with Aristotle who sent the historian, and the Athenians who conspired against him.⁴⁸

It makes one wonder why Ptolemy in this case is overly hostile to Alexander (or not in line with the ‘official truth’), and openly ascribing Callisthenes’ death to the king, or did not hide and/or diminish his responsibilities in this affair. In that respect, we have to remind ourselves that the ‘official version’ was quickly unveiled and the truth was known by Aristotle and his school. Plutarch recalls the frictions between Aristotle and Alexander after Callisthenes’ death,⁴⁹ and Theophrastus, pupil of Aristotle and leader of the Peripatetic school after his teacher’s death, composed a work entitled *Callisthenes or On Mourning*, likely written a year after the historian’s death.⁵⁰ Although we have only some fragments and cannot verify the exact content of it, nevertheless the pamphlet likely dealt with Callisthenes’ unfair death or, in any case, was based on the historian’s end, for which Theophrastus expressed his sorrow.⁵¹

Therefore, choosing to tell the truth, Ptolemy disclosed what all—Greeks and above all Peripatetics—long already knew. If he, as Chares and Aristobulus, had adopted the ‘official truth’ to protect Alexander’s name, and had continued denying the historical reality, he would have compromised the reli-

48 Plu. *Alex.* 55.7. The authenticity of the letter is controversial: some believe it a forgery e.g. Albert Brian Bosworth, “Aristotle and Callisthenes”, *Historia* 19 (1970), 411; others authentic: e.g. Hamilton, *Plutarch. Alexander. A Commentary*, 154; Robert Flacelière and [Émile Chambry], *Plutarque. Vies. Tome IX. Alexandre-César* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1975), 246 comm. ad loc.

49 Plu. *Alex.* 55.7–8. See Hamilton, *Alexander the Great*, 108; Pédech, *Historiens compagnons d’Alexandre*, 349–350; Squillace, *Basileis o Tyrannoi*, 90, *contra* Ernst Badian, “The Eunuch Bagoas. A Study on Methody”, *Classical Quarterly* 8 (1958), 144–157; Eckart Mensching, “Peripatetiker über Alexander”, *Historia* 12 (1963), 274–282; Bosworth, “Aristotle and Callisthenes”, 407–413.

50 Stephen White, “Theophrastus and Callisthenes”, in *Influences on Peripatetic Rhetoric: Studies in Honor of William W. Fortenbaugh*, ed. D. Mirhady (Brill: Leiden 2007), 215.

51 D.L. V 45 = Theophr. F 1.123 FHSQ = *Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence*, Edited and Translated by William W. Fortenbaugh, Pamela M. Huby, Robert W. Sharples (Greek and Latin) and Dimitri Gutas (Arabic), 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1993); Cic. *Tusc.* III 10.21 = Theophr. F 505 FHSQ; Cic. *Tusc.* V 10.25 = Theophr. F 493 FHSQ; Alex. *Aphr. De an.* 25 = Theophr. F 504 FHSQ; see: White, “Theophrastus and Callisthenes”, 211–230. Probably Theophrastus’ treatise determined the later negative image of Alexander in the sources, as many scholars believe: see Johannes Stroux, “Die stoische Beurteilung Alexanders des Grossen”, *Philologus* 88 (1933), 222–240; Mensching, “Peripatetiker über Alexander”, 279–282; William W. Fortenbaugh, *Quellen zur Ethic Theophrasts* (Amsterdam: B.R. Grüner 1984), 102–103.

ability and authoritativeness of his work before the intellectuals whom he was calling to Alexandria after he had become king and had started his cultural projects.⁵²

Among these there was Demetrius of Phalerum who, after ruling Athens for ten years on behalf of Cassander, in 307 was exiled from the *polis* by Demetrius Poliorcetes.⁵³ After Cassander's death in 297/6, Demetrius recovered in Egypt where he was kindly accepted by Ptolemy, likely when the king was writing his historical memory. In Egypt, at Alexandria, he lived for many years, became the first advisor of the king, and was instructed to organize the Great Library on the model of Peripatus' Library at Athens.⁵⁴ The sources mention Demetrius, together with Theophrastus, Aristoxenus of Tarentum and Dicaearchus of Mes-

52 Str. XVII 1.8 CC 793–794; *OGIS* 714; Philostr. *VS* I 22, 3; 22, 5; D.C. LXXVII 7; see Edward A. Parsons, *The Alexandrian Library, Glory of the Hellenistic World. Its Rise, Antiquities and Destruction*, (London: Cleaver-Hume Press, 1952); Peter M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), Vol. 1: *Text*, 320–335; John P. Lynch, *Aristotle's School. A Study of a Greek Educational Institution*, (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1972), 121–123; Rudolph Blum, *Kallimachos. The Alexandrian Library and the Origins of Bibliography*, (Frankfurt am Main 1977, Translated from the German by Hans H. Wellisch, Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 95–123; Andrew Erskine, “Culture and Power in Ptolemaic Egypt: the Museum and Library of Alexandria”, *Greece and Rome* series 2. 42.1 (1995): 38–48; Luciano Canfora, “Le biblioteche ellenistiche”, in *Le biblioteche nel mondo antico e medievale*, a cura di Guglielmo Cavallo, (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1998), 5–28; Monica Berti and Virgilio Costa, *La biblioteca di Alessandria. Storia di un paradiso perduto* (Tivoli: Tored, 2010), 1–38; Giuseppe Squillace, “Erofilo ed Erasistrato e il recupero di testi medici per la Biblioteca di Alessandria”, in *Ritorno ad Alessandria. Storiografia antica e cultura bibliotecaria: tracce di una relazione perduta*, Atti del convegno di studi, Roma 2012, a cura di Monica Berti and Virgilio Costa, (Tivoli: Tored, 2013), 155–156.

53 On Demetrius' rule at Athens: Helmut Berve, *Die Tyrannis bei den Griechen*, (München: C.H. Beck, 1967), Vol. I, 386–387; Vol. II, 707; Claude Mossé, *La Tyrannie dans la Grèce antique*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), 155 ff.; Claude Mossé, “Démétrios de Phalère: un philosophe au pouvoir?”, in *Alexandrie 111^e siècle av. J.-C. Tous les savoirs du monde ou le rêve d'universalité des Ptolémées*, eds. Christian Jacob and François De Polignac (Paris: Autrement, 1992), 83–92; Lara O'Sullivan, *The Regime of Demetrius of Phalerum in Athens, 317–307 BCE* (*Mnemosyne* Suppl., 318, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2009).

54 Demetr. *FF* 2; 38; 40; 59 Stork-Ophuijsen-Dorandi; see Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Vol. 1: *Text*, 114; Blum, *Kallimachos*, 100; Berti-Costa, *La biblioteca di Alessandria*, 62–65; Squillace, “Erofilo ed Erasistrato”, 166–167. On Demetrius see also Fritz Wehrli, “Der Peripatos bis zum Beginn der römischen Kaiserzeit”, in *Die Philosophie der Antike*. Band III, *Ältere Akademie. Aristoteles-Peripatos*, Hrsg. Hellmut Flashar (Basel-Stuttgart: Schwabe & Co AG—Verlag, 1983), 559–566.

sana, as one of the most brilliant scholars of the Peripatetic school at Athens, and most linked to Aristotle.⁵⁵

Ptolemy was closely connected with the Peripatetic school and many exponents of it lived at the royal court at Alexandria or were associated with him. Erasistratus of Ceos, one of the most famous doctors at Ptolemy's court, heard the lectures of the physicians Metrodorus, Aristotle's son-in-law,⁵⁶ of Theophrastus at Athens⁵⁷ and probably of the Peripatetic Straton of Lampsacus.⁵⁸ Herophilus of Chalcedon, another very famous physician who lived in Alexandria during the reigns of Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II, was linked to the Academy and Peripatus too, and was probably influenced by the scientific method of both the schools.⁵⁹ Furthermore, Ptolemy chose the peripatetic Straton of Lampsacus as preceptor of his son, the future Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Straton lived at Alexandria for some years and returned to Athens in 288 after Theophrastus' death, when he became master of the Peripatetic school.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Ptolemy also tried to lure Theophrastus himself to Alexandria, but without success.⁶¹

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- 55 On Theophrastus, Aristoxenus of Tarentum and Dicaearchus of Messana, see Lynch, *Aristotle's School*, 97–105; 121–123; 135–146; Wehrli, “Der Peripatos”, 474–522; 535–539; 540–546.
- 56 Erasistr. F 5 Garofalo; see Ivan Garofalo, *Erasistrati Fragmenta* (Pisa: Giardini Editori e Stampatori, 1988), 17; John Scarborough, “s.v. Erasistratos of Ioulis on Keos”, in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists. The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, eds. Paul T. Keyser and Georgia L. Irby-Massie (London-New York: Routledge, 2008), 294.
- 57 D.L. V 57 = Erasistr. F 7 Garofalo. See Garofalo, *Erasistrati Fragmenta*, 17; 35. Even if some scholars do not accept Diogenes Laertius' account, they consider believable the links between Erasistratus and the Peripatetic school: John Scarborough, “Erasistratus, student of Theophrastus?”, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 59, (1985), 515–517; Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (London-New York: Routledge 2004), 134; Scarborough, “s.v. Erasistratos of Ioulis on Keos”, 294.
- 58 This is the hypothesis of Karl O. Brink, “Callimachus and Aristotle: An Inquiry into Callimachus' ΠΡΟΣ ΠΡΑΞΙΦΑΝΗΝ”, *The Classical Quarterly* 40 (1946), 11; see also Garofalo, *Erasistrati Fragmenta*, 17; 35; Ivan Garofalo, “Figure della medicina ellenistica”, in *Lo spazio letterario della Grecia antica*, Vol. 1: *La produzione e la circolazione del testo*, Tomo II, a cura di Giuseppe Cambiano, Luciano Canfora and Diego Lanza (Roma: Salerno Editrice: 1993), 353.
- 59 See Heinrich Von Staden, *Herophilus. The Art of Medicine in Early Alexandria* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), 39; Squillace, “Erofilo ed Erasistrato”, 168–169.
- 60 Straton FF 1–3 Wehrli; see Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Vol. 1: *Text*, 311; 427–428; Vol. II, *Notes*, 476 nt. 123; 617 nt. 406; Wehrli, “Der Peripatos”, 569–574.
- 61 D.L. V 37; cfr. Brink, “Callimachus and Aristotle”, 11; Walter M. Ellis, *Ptolemy of Egypt* (London-New York: Routledge, 1994), 51.

In the light of what has been said, Ptolemy admired and respected Aristotle and the Peripatetic school, as the presence at the court of Alexandria of Peripatetics and of people with a peripatetic culture attests. Therefore, it is not random chance that Ptolemy chose the Peripatus as model for the organization of the Library of Alexandria, and a peripatetic like Demetrius as director in charge of the project.⁶²

Likely the presence at Alexandria of so important a peripatetic as Demetrius (moreover a friend and pupil of Theophrastus,⁶³ whose lectures, according to Suidas, he heard at the Peripatus⁶⁴), of many Peripatetics, and of people trained in the peripatetic culture, influenced Ptolemy and induced him to tell the truth about Callisthenes' death in his historical writing. The 'official truth' that freed Alexander from blame could have had a negative impact on Demetrius, his main advisor, and on all the Peripatetics whose friendly collaboration he aspired to garner. Unveiling the truth, Ptolemy protected the reliability of his work as well as his own name as new king of Egypt before the intellectuals who had long known the truth about this episode.

Therefore, if Ptolemy in his historical work celebrated Alexander on many occasions, regarding Callisthenes' death he took a step back, abandoning the fiction and unveiled the truth. Many years later, he unmasked the propaganda previously elaborated by Alexander and his entourage (of which Chares was a very important figure). Chares and Aristobulus made the opposite decision to propose again the 'official truth', attempting to convert a manipulation and propaganda into historical fact based on Alexander's 'unique truth'.

Conclusions

The question we have to ask is this: what role did Ptolemy and Aristobulus play in building and preserving Alexander's propaganda, both initially, when they were members of the king's entourage and contributing to the dissemination of ideological messages within the army in order to manufacture consent and defend Alexander's name; and many years later, when, as historians, they transformed the propagandistic messages into historical facts through their works?

62 Squillace, "Erofilo ed Erasistrato", 169–178.

63 Demetr. F 1 Stork-Ophuijsen-Dorandi.

64 Suid. s.v. Δημήτριος (= Demetr. F 2 Stork-Ophuijsen-Dorandi).

On the Gordian knot, the favourable version of Aristobulus contrasts with other sources (οἱ μὲν οὖν πολλοὶ φασι in Plutarch; οἱ μὲν λέγουσιν in Arrian), in which there was likely Ptolemy too.⁶⁵ If immediately Aristobulus and Ptolemy diffused the 'official truth' in order to sustain Alexander's propaganda built on manipulation and deception, many years later in their writings, Ptolemy distanced himself by telling the truth, on the contrary Aristobulus proposed again the message attempting to revise historical fact.

The two historians adopted the same stance on Callisthenes' death. In this case we find in Chares and Aristobulus the 'official version' that freed Alexander from blame, in Ptolemy the truth that charged the king for Callisthenes' end. As on the Gordian knot, in this case too Aristobulus related it in his historical work, changing again a propagandistic message into historical memory and showing it as the 'unique truth'. On the contrary, Ptolemy, who in other circumstances had safeguarded Alexander's name, sometimes by obfuscating reality, in this case clearly charged his king with Callisthenes' execution.

Therefore, if in 333 and 327 Ptolemy and Aristobulus had been important members of Alexander's entourage, they assumed a different role many years later when they started writing their memoirs. Reorganizing in a complete book the parts already written and/or his notes, Aristobulus, aware of the reality, chose—at least regarding the Gordian knot and Callisthenes' death—to preserve the propagandistic messages favourable to Alexander and, in honour of the king, to remind them as the 'unique truth'. On the contrary, Ptolemy, old and king of Egypt when he wrote, even if he protected Alexander's name in many other circumstances, did not hesitate to reveal the facts regarding the Gordian knot and, above all, Callisthenes' death. In the last case he had a further aim: the consent of the Peripatetic school, on which he was building his fame as king and his cultural project at Alexandria.

Recalling and preserving a manipulated truth, Aristobulus transformed a propagandistic message into a means of celebration and finally into historical memory. Reiterating the deception also after many years, the historian continued to protect Alexander, to free him from all the blame, and to present him in a positive light. Fortunately the presence of a second and completely different version, ascribable (Gordian knot) or ascribed (Callisthenes' death) to Ptolemy, unmask manipulation and deception. It permits one to break the wall of silence and trickery, uncover the truth and disclose an authentic feature of Alexander's portrait. If the Macedonian king was an extraordinary general able to lead his army into the heart of Asia, he was also a leader ready to

65 Arr. *An. Incipit* 1–2 = Aristob. *FGrHist* 139, T 6 = *BNJ* 139, T 6 and Ptol. *FGrHist* 138, T 1.

deceive in the name of his own interests. Manipulating the truth—personally or through his entourage—he did not hesitate to impose his own version showing it as ‘the unique truth’.

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The Reception of Alexander in Hellenistic Art

Olga Palagia

Introduction

Alexander appears to have invented his own image as a youthful ruler who preserved his young looks by shaving his chin contrary to usual practice, and by growing his hair longer than average, swept up from the forehead to form an *anastole*. In addition, he was said to have a melting gaze and crooked neck.¹ Alexander's own favourite artists, the sculptor Lysippus, the painter Apelles and the gem-cutter Pyrgoteles, disseminated his official image during his lifetime. Other artists, like Leochares and Euphranor of the Attic School, also attempted his portrait, not least during the lifetime of his father, Philip II, when Alexander was crown prince.² None of these works has come down to us. The only inscribed portrait of Alexander is the Azara herm of the Roman period, which is heavily restored.³ It is thought to reflect an original by Lysippus though this is sometimes disputed. It does, nevertheless, provide a blueprint for Alexander's appearance enabling us to recognize his image.

The Hellenistic period begins with Alexander's death in Babylon in 323 and ends with Cleopatra VII's death in Alexandria in 30 BC. Shortly after his death in 323, Alexander's empire disintegrated and was divided into the kingdoms of the Successors.⁴ Each one of them claimed him in some manner and depended

1 On the physical characteristics of Alexander, see Plut. *Mor.* 180B and 335A–B; *Alex.* 4.1–7; Athen. 13.565a; Ael. *VH* 12.14. T. Hölscher, *Ideal und Wirklichkeit in den Bildnissen Alexanders des Grossen* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1971), 24–42; A. Stewart, “Alexander in Greek and Roman art”, in *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great*, ed. J. Roisman (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 33–34; T. Hölscher, *Herrschaft und Lebensalter Alexander der Grosse* (Basel: Schwabe, 2009), 26–32.

2 A. Stewart, *Faces of Power* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, 1993), 360–362 (sources); Stewart, “Alexander in Greek and Roman art”, 34–40.

3 Paris, Louvre Ma 436, from Tivoli. Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 423, figs. 45–46; S. Descamps-Lequime, ed., *Au royaume d'Alexandre le Grand* (Paris: Somogy éditions d'art, 2011), 646, cat.no. 411.

4 A.B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Canto edition, 1993), 175–176.

on him as a source of legitimacy. Their attitude favoured the erection of portraits of Alexander as founder hero, spurious ancestor, royal predecessor or heroic conqueror and obvious paradigm of the current ruler. The Successors moreover indulged in physical imitation of Alexander by adopting his clean-shaven look or copying his clothes.⁵ Not only did their images emulate his, but divine and heroic figures like those of Heracles, Helios, Achilles and various river gods of the Hellenistic period assumed his facial characteristics.⁶ Such similarities sometimes lead to confusion and it can be problematic to distinguish posthumous portraits of Alexander from images of his imitators. The problem is compounded by the fact that the majority of artworks portraying Alexander are only known from Roman copies and there is no consensus on whether these copies depend on lifetime or posthumous representations of the conqueror. In addition, we have literary records of lost portraits and it is always a struggle to correlate them to extant art works.

Alexander's posthumous portraiture can be roughly divided into two periods: those created within the lifetimes of his contemporaries (about 323–280 BC) and those created after all living memory of the conqueror had ceased (280–30 BC). With the passage of time, Alexander's appearance became rejuvenated, merging with the legend of the youthful hero that he himself had originally cultivated. In addition, narrative scenes of Alexander's deeds gave way to single images or Alexander accompanied by personifications. This chapter will discuss a selection of portraits and themes in order to convey the role played by Alexander's image in the Hellenistic kingdoms that were formed after the dissolution of his empire.

323–280 BC

One of the earliest posthumous portraits of Alexander was on a panel painting decorating his funeral cart, prepared in Babylon to Perdikkas' orders between 323 and 322 BC.⁷ The king was portrayed in the Persian manner, enthroned

5 R.R.R. Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 68. Of his Companions, soon after Alexander's death, Leonnatus imitated his physical appearance (Arr. *Succ.* F 12), while Craterus adopted regal dress (Arr. *Succ.* F 19).

6 A. Trofimova, *Imitatio Alexandri in Hellenistic Art* (Rome: Bretschneider, 2012), 73–80, 103–112, 133–140; O. Palagia, *The Impact of Alexander the Great in the Arts of Greece* (Leiden: BABESCH Foundation, 2015), 11, figs. 18, 20, 21.

7 Diod. 18.27.1. On Alexander's funeral cart, see Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 216–220.

in his chariot according to Achaemenid custom,⁸ and holding a sceptre. He was surrounded by Macedonian and Persian bodyguards. The other panels showed Alexander's cavalry, fleet and army of elephants. This was intended as a portrayal of the conqueror's military might at the time of his death and, as it turned out, it was probably the last gasp of the image of the "persianized" Alexander, apart from a few examples showing him in mixed Greek and Persian dress⁹ to be discussed below. His funeral cart probably represented him the way he would have chosen to depict himself. But after his death, his image was exploited by his Successors to legitimize their rule since they ultimately owed their power and position to him. These strategies of commemoration comprised the dissemination of Alexander's image on coins minted in the kingdoms of the Successors, as well as on art works immortalizing not only Alexander's battles against Darius III, but also his lion hunts in the game parks of the Persian Empire. The capture of the lion acquired a symbolic significance, as a struggle for the kingship of Asia.¹⁰ Alexander's Companions who had shared not only the rigours of the military campaigns, but also the lion hunts with him, were entitled to a share of his empire.¹¹ This is made clear by the dedicatory epigram of a bronze group of Alexander and Craterus hunting a

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- 8 C. Schäfer, *Eumenes of Kardia* (Frankfurt: Martha Clauss, 2002), 26–32 discusses the custom of Persian kings setting out with the army for battle, sitting in a chariot and following the chariot of Ahura Mazda which carried the god's empty throne. Cf. Hdt 7.40. Persians sitting in chariots are documented by a figure sitting in a chariot from one of the friezes of Heroon G (ca. 470–460 BC) on the acropolis of Xanthos, British Museum B 313; H. Metzger, *Fouilles de Xanthos 2. L'acropole Lycienne* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1963), 53, 57, pl. 39; D. Castriota, *Myth, Ethos and Actuality. Official Art in Fifth-century BC Athens* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 222–225, fig. 38. Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 219 remarks that Greeks, Macedonians and Persians did not sit in chariots but this clearly did not apply to Persians.
- 9 After Darius III's death in 330, Alexander took to wearing a Persian sleeved chiton though he did not adopt other paraphernalia of Persian dress. Arr. *An.* 4.7.4 and 4.9.9; Diod. 17.77.5; Athen. 12.535f and 537e; Curt. 6.6.4; Plut. *Alex.* 45.2; *Mor.* 329f–330a; Just. 12.3.8. Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 352–356; O. Palagia, "Hephaestion's Pyre and the royal hunt of Alexander", in *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction*, ed. A.B. Bosworth and E.J. Baynham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 188.
- 10 Aptly expressed in Plut. *Alex.* 40.4–5.
- 11 Palagia, "Hephaestion's Pyre", 184; E.N. Borza and O. Palagia, "The Chronology of the Macedonian Royal Tombs at Vergina", *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 122 (2007): 97–98. E. Carney, *King and Court in Ancient Macedonia* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2015), 272–273 argues that the lion hunt iconography was devised by Alexander's Successors in order to associate themselves with Alexander's Asian conquest.

lion, dedicated by Craterus in Apollo's sanctuary at Delphi a few years after Alexander's death to mark his bid for the succession.¹²

Coins

Ptolemy I was the first to place Alexander's image on the obverse of his silver coins, minted in Egypt after Ptolemy had managed to hijack Alexander's body from the Macedonian army of Perdiccas in 320/19 BC.¹³ Alexander's head was inspired by the head of Heracles on the obverse of Alexander's own coinage.¹⁴ In the new coins, which retained at first Alexander's original reverse of a seated Zeus, Alexander wears an elephant scalp, symbol of his defeat of Porus' elephants and his Indian conquest, along with the horn of Ammon, as a token of Alexander's deification, also being an allusion to Alexander's visit to the oracle of Ammon in 331; to an Egyptian audience, Ammon's horn additionally symbolized the pharaoh's assimilation to the sun god, Amun-Re.¹⁵ Some years later, perhaps around 312 and signalling Ptolemy's change of capital from Memphis to Alexandria, the head of Alexander in elephant scalp acquires Dionysus' headband (*mitra*) tied across his forehead, while Zeus' scaly aegis is added to the lower part of the elephant scalp (Fig. 6.1).¹⁶ Alexander is thus identified with Ammon, Dionysus and Zeus at once, offering his divine protection to Ptolemy. After Ptolemy I was proclaimed king in 305, he issued a number of gold staters with his portraits on the obverse, carrying a spectacular image of Alexander on the reverse, holding Zeus' thunderbolt and a sceptre, and driving a chariot drawn by four elephants.¹⁷ The theme of Alexander on an elephant chariot

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- 12 Epigram: A. Jacquemin et al., *Choix d'inscriptions de Delphes* (Paris: de Boccard, 2012), 63–64, no. 63. See also below, p. 150 and nn. 42–45.
 - 13 Diod. 18.28. G. Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, trans. T. Saavedra (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 15.
 - 14 O. Mørkholm, *Early Hellenistic Coinage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 43, pl. III, 40–43.
 - 15 K.A. Sheedy, ed., *Alexander and the Hellenistic Kingdoms* (Sydney: Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies, 2007), 107–108, nos. 42–43; K. Dahmen, *The Legend of Alexander the Great in Greek and Roman Coins* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 10–11, 112–113, pl. 4; C.L. Lorber, "The coinage of the Ptolemies", in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, ed. W.E. Metcalf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 212, fig. 12.3; Hölbl, *History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 93.
 - 16 Sheedy, *Alexander and the Hellenistic Kingdoms*, 110–112, nos. 44–46; Dahmen, *Legend of Alexander*, 11, 113, pl. 4; Lorber, *Coinage of the Ptolemies*, 212, fig. 12.3.
 - 17 Sheedy, *Alexander and the Hellenistic Kingdoms*, 114–115, no. 47; Lorber, *Coinage of the Ptolemies*, 2012, 213, fig. 12.4.



FIGURE 6.1 *Silver tetradrachm of Ptolemy I (c. 312), with portrait of Alexander with elephant scalp*
LONDON, BRITISH MUSEUM 1987.0649.508

acquired a particular significance for the Ptolemies as a golden statue of the conqueror was paraded on a chariot drawn by live elephants during the Grand Procession of Ptolemy II Philadelphus around 276/5 BC.¹⁸

To the reign of Ptolemy I may be attributed the equestrian statue of Alexander *ktistes* (founder), erected in Alexandria.¹⁹ No visual record of this statue has come down to us but we have another statuary type of Alexander from Alexandria, Alexander Aigiochos, wearing Zeus' aegis in the manner of a Macedonian *chlamys* and raising his right hand, perhaps holding a sceptre. The imagery testifies to a cult of Alexander in Alexandria, associated with the dynastic cult of

18 Described by Kallixeinos of Rhodes ap. Athen. 5.202A. Dahmen, *Legend of Alexander*, 60.

19 Pseudo-Libanius (Nikolaos Rheter), *Progymnasmata* 27 (vol. 8, 533–555). Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 397–400, T 126; Stewart, “Alexander in Greek and Roman art”, 48.

the Ptolemies.²⁰ This type is known from a number of statuettes found at various sites in Egypt.²¹

Alexander wearing an elephant scalp served briefly as a coin obverse of Seleucus I around the beginning of the third century, in celebration of Seleucus' attempt to follow in Alexander's footsteps into India. The elephant scalp here does not denote defeat of the enemy's elephants but probably commemorates the acquisition of a contingent of elephants from the Mauryan king Chandragupta.²² Seleucus, however, omitted all the other symbols embellishing Alexander's image on Ptolemy's coins because of their obvious association with Egypt.

But the most memorable and long-lasting coin image of Alexander was commissioned by Lysimachus, king of Thrace, in the early third century (Fig. 6.2). Alexander is shown with Ammon's horn signifying deification, and wearing the royal diadem.²³ These coins circulated long after Lysimachus' demise, into the second century BC, and served as a prototype for a tourmaline intaglio produced in Bactria or India probably later in the third century.²⁴

Battle Scenes

Alexander himself is not known to have commissioned any battle pieces commemorating his two encounters with Darius III on the battlefield, but two such paintings are documented after his death. Oddly enough, Cassander, who had not participated in Alexander's Asian campaign, commissioned a battle of Alexander and Darius from Philoxenus of Eretria.²⁵ It is not stated whether this was the battle of Issus or Gaugamela. It is reasonable to suppose that Cassander, though no friend of Alexander, decorated his palace at Pella with one of

20 P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 215–216. This was separate from the cult of Alexander as founder: Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 215.

21 Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 421–422, fig. 83; Stewart, "Alexander in Greek and Roman art", 48.

22 Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 313–315 with n. 72 citing the sources; Dahmen, *Legend of Alexander*, 117–118, pl. 7; A.B. Bosworth, "Rider in the chariot: Ptolemy, Alexander and the elephants", in *Alexander and the Hellenistic Kingdoms*, ed. K.A. Sheedy (Sydney: Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies, 2007), 21–22.

23 Dahmen, *Legend of Alexander*, 119, pl. 8; Sheedy, *Alexander and the Hellenistic Kingdoms*, 137–149, nos. 63–74.

24 Intaglio: Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 1892.1499. Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 321–323, figs. 118–119; O. Palagia, "The impact of Alexander the Great in the art of Central Asia", in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. R. Stoneman et al. (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2012), 376–377, fig. 11.

25 Pliny, *NH* 35.110.



FIGURE 6.2 *Silver tetradrachm issued by Lysimachus, king of Thrace, in the early third century with Alexander shown with Ammon's horn and wearing the royal diadem*

NEW YORK, AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY 1966.75.101

the conqueror's exploits after he became ruler of Macedonia in 316.²⁶ He had, after all, married his half-sister, Thessaloniki, in order to legitimize his position, and named his youngest son after him.²⁷

The battle of Issus was painted by Helena of Egypt, a rare instance of a woman painter, who was said to be a contemporary of Alexander.²⁸ It is likely that the painting was commissioned by Ptolemy I, who would have wished to commemorate his participation in the victory.²⁹ Attempts to date the painting

26 Pace Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 149–150, who dated the painting soon after the battle of Issus and before 324 when Cassander fell out with Alexander. Stewart, "Alexander in Greek and Roman art", 47, later recanted. For the date of the painting during Cassander's rule, see also A. Cohen, *The Alexander Mosaic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 115.

27 Diod. 19.52.1 and 61.2. Palagia, "Hephaestion's Pyre", 198.

28 Photius, *Bibliotheca* 190.149b29–33 Bekker. Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 376, p 10.

29 Cf. Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 134.

to the second century BC do not explain adequately the purpose of such a commission by a later Ptolemy.³⁰

Only two battle pieces featuring Alexander have survived. The first is the so-called Alexander mosaic, excavated in the House of the Faun in Pompeii, showing a cavalry battle between Macedonians and Persians. It dates from the late second century BC but is generally acknowledged to copy an earlier monumental painting, created in the late fourth century.³¹ The mosaic employs the four-colour palette of the fourth century and the action is telescoped within a narrow frame. It represents a specific episode of the battle of Issus (333 BC), when Alexander was prevented from capturing Darius by the intervention of the Great King's brother and his elite corps.³² Alexander is shown as leader of the cavalry, riding his famous horse Bucephalus and thrusting his spear into a Persian nobleman who checks his advance towards the chariot of Darius. Alexander's cuirass and sword closely resemble the cuirass and sword excavated in Vergina Tomb II.³³ He is represented with longish, straight hair and sideburns, a high forehead, large eyes and a fierce expression (Fig. 6.3). There has been no attempt at idealization: he is the invincible conqueror in action. The faces of Alexander's Companions on the mosaic are damaged beyond repair but we assume that the painting's patron was portrayed near the conqueror. Even though the mosaic is often attributed to Philoxenus of Eretria,³⁴ the fact that the other mosaics in the House of the Faun carry Egyptian motifs and Nilotic scenes points in the direction of Helena of Egypt.³⁵

The same episode of Alexander's attack on the Persian nobleman who threw himself in his path and checked his advance upon Darius, is depicted on one

30 M. Pfrommer, *Untersuchungen zur Chronologie und Komposition des Alexandermosaiks* (Mainz: von Zabern, 1988), 17–18, 208–209.

31 Naples, National Museum 10020. Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 130–150, col. pls. 4–6; Cohen, *Alexander Mosaic*; Stewart, "Alexander in Greek and Roman art", 47, fig. 7; O. Palagia, "Alexander's battles against Persians in the art of the Successors", in *Greek Historians on War and Kingship*, ed. T. Howe et al. (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2017), 179–180. Pfrommer, *Untersuchungen*, 208–209, dates its prototype to the second century BC even though the armour and equipment, particularly of the Macedonians, portrayed in the picture has many parallels in the fourth century: see Cohen, *Alexander Mosaic*, 51–82.

32 The episode is described in Diod. 17.34.1–5. For an analysis of the action, see Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 134–139; Palagia, "Alexander's battles", 179–180.

33 Cohen, *Alexander Mosaic*, figs. 30 and 57; Borza and Palagia, "Chronology", fig. 17; Palagia, "Impact of Alexander on the Arts", figs. 7–8.

34 Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 147–150; Stewart, "Alexander in Greek and Roman art", 47.

35 Pfrommer, *Untersuchungen*, 17–18; Palagia, "Alexander's battles", 180.



FIGURE 6.3 *Alexander mosaic, from the House of the Faun, Pompeii, late 2nd century BC. Detail of Alexander.*

NAPLES, NATIONAL MUSEUM 10020. PHOTO: HANS R. GOETTE

of the long sides of the so-called Alexander Sarcophagus, although Darius on his chariot is not shown here.³⁶ This sarcophagus is named after Alexander not

36 Istanbul Archaeological Museum 370. Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 299–301, 422–423, figs. 102–103 and 105–106; Palagia, “Hephaestion’s Pyre”, 186–189; Stewart, “Alexander in Greek and Roman art”, 49, fig. 9; V. Brinkmann et al., “Der Alexandersarkophag”, in *Alexander der Grosse*, ed. R. Gebhard et al. (Darmstadt and Mainz: von Zabern, 2013), 180–187; Palagia “Alexander’s battles”, 181–182.

because it contained his body but because it depicts him twice. It was found in the royal cemetery of Sidon in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon), which housed the remains of the kings of Sidon, and is commonly attributed to Abdalonymus, who was appointed king of Sidon by Alexander at Hephaestion's instigation, in 332 BC, after the battle of Issus. The date of Abdalonymus' death is unknown, but he certainly outlived Alexander.³⁷ On the sarcophagus Alexander wears a lion scalp helmet inspired by the image of Heracles on his coins. His features are idealized and he lacks the long straight hair and *anastole* of his usual portraiture. He wears a chiton with long sleeves and an overfall similar to the garments worn by the Persians. His mixed Greek and Persian style costume is retrospective in the context of the battle, since he only adopted it after Darius' death.³⁸ The sarcophagus is made of Pentelic marble, may be attributed to an Athenian sculptor and dates from the final decades of the fourth century. Abdalonymus evidently chose to commemorate the famous battle to the outcome of which he owed his throne.

Lion Hunts

The other long side of that same sarcophagus depicts a multiple-quarry hunt indicating that it is taking place in a Persian game park.³⁹ The central scene involves a mounted lion hunt with the participation of both Persians and Macedonians. The lion attacks the horse of a Persian rider who may be Abdalonymus. The horseman behind him coming to the rescue is generally recognized as Alexander, despite his short curly hair. His head has a depression for the addition of a royal diadem and he wears a Persian-style chiton. His appearance indicates that the sculptor only knew him by hearsay but his presence is justified by his impact on the life of Abdalonymus and the fate of his kingdom. The mounted big-game hunt follows the Persian custom, which, according to Arrian (*An.* 4.13.1), was introduced to Macedonia by Philip II. Alexander, however, seems to have hunted lions in Persia on foot and to have risked his life doing so until he was compelled to use a horse by the Macedonian army.⁴⁰ We do not know if the mounted hunt on the sarcophagus is an accurate record of Alexander's hunt in Phoenicia or whether it shows a typical Persian hunt inserting a mounted Alexander in order to emphasize his familiarity with Abdalonymus.

37 See Palagia, "Hephaestion's Pyre", 186.

38 See n. 9 above.

39 On the sarcophagus, see n. 36 above.

40 Curt. 8.1.18. Palagia, "Hephaestion's Pyre", 183–184.

There are ancient records of a hunt in what the ancient sources describe as Syria, an area which comprises modern Lebanon, where Alexander hunted a lion on foot at great risk to his life only to be rescued by his Companion Craterus.⁴¹ The episode was immortalized in a colossal bronze group commissioned ca. 321 by Craterus from Lysippus and Leochares, two sculptors who had known Alexander and were therefore apt to portray him accurately.⁴² The sculpture, set up at Delphi, has vanished but the dedicatory epigram is preserved, informing us that the group was eventually dedicated by Craterus' homonymous son and that the hunt was a man-to-man combat.⁴³ A paean in honour of Craterus, composed by Alexinus, was sung at Delphi, probably to mark the dedication of the monument.⁴⁴ Its date can hardly go beyond 316, which marks the lower limit of Lysippus' career.⁴⁵ The significance of Craterus' participation in Alexander's lion hunt is made clear in the epigram, where his dynastic ambitions are barely disguised.

A floor mosaic of the late fourth century, excavated in a palatial mansion at Pella, represents two Macedonians hunting a lion on foot.⁴⁶ They are depicted in heroic nudity and their idealized features show no attempt at portraiture; Alexander can nevertheless be recognized in the man on the left on account of his longish hair. He wears a broad-brimmed *petasos* and wields a javelin. His companion diverts the lion's attention by attacking it with his sword. Another floor mosaic, found in a fragmentary condition in a Hellenistic house in Palermo, represents a multi-quarry mounted hunt in exotic surroundings including a Persian hunter.⁴⁷ It is thought to be a copy of a late-fourth or early-third century painting on account of its four-colour palette. The horseman about to strike the lion with his javelin is identified with Alexander though only part of him survives.

41 Plut. *Alex.* 40.4–5.

42 See n. 41 above and Plut. *Alex.* 74.6; Pliny, *NH* 34.64. Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 270–274 and 390–392; Palagia, “Hephaestion's Pyre”, 184–185; Stewart, “Alexander in Greek and Roman art”, 45; Borza and Palagia, “Chronology”, 97.

43 A. Jacquemin et al., *Choix d'Inscriptions de Delphes* (Paris: De Boccard, 2012), 63–64, no. 63.

44 Athen. 15.696e–f.

45 In 316 he designed a wine amphora for Cassander's newly founded city of Cassandreia: Athen. 11.784c. Palagia, “Hephaestion's Pyre”, 185 and 198.

46 Pella Museum Mosaic no. 6. Palagia, “Hephaestion's Pyre”, 185–186; Descamps-Lequime, *Au royaume*, 46–47, no. 1.

47 W. Wootton, “Another Alexander mosaic”, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 15 (2002): 264–274; Palagia, *Impact of Alexander on the Arts*, 6.

Alexander as a mounted hunter (Fig. 6.4)⁴⁸ participating in a lion hunt appears in the painted frieze on the façade of Vergina Tomb 11, perhaps the most controversial monument in Macedonian archaeology. The frieze represents a multiple-quarry hunt which is broken up in episodes centred on the animal or animals being hunted, e.g., deer, boar, lion and bear.⁴⁹ Some hunters are on foot, others on horseback. The majority of scholars agree that the Vergina hunt is non-mythological⁵⁰ but there is no consensus as to the date of the frieze, the identities of the hunters or the questions arising from the fragmented landscape which may represent different habitats or even different seasons of the year.⁵¹

A brief summary of the controversy surrounding Tomb 11 will suffice here. The tomb was excavated by Manolis Andronikos in the late 1970s and is still only partially published. It was found unlooted and its rich burial goods, now housed in the Museum of the Royal Tombs at Vergina, were so stunning that it was attributed to royalty. A man was buried in the main chamber and a woman in the ante-chamber. Oddly enough, her burial was accompanied by weapons indicating a woman with military training. Andronikos pointed out that the tomb could only date from the second half of the fourth century, a period which witnessed the burial in Macedonian soil of only two kings, Philip II and his son, Philip III Arrhidaeus.⁵² His tentative attribution to Philip II and his wife Cleopatra⁵³ was soon challenged by Phyllis Lehmann,⁵⁴ who suggested that the woman warrior was probably Adea Eurydice, wife of Philip III Arrhidaeus, half-brother and successor of Alexander the Great to the throne of Macedon,

48 Identified by M. Andronikos, *Vergina* (Athens: Ekdotiki Athenon, 1984), 116. See also Palagia, "Hephaestion's Pyre", 195 with n. 118.

49 For a full publication and illustration of the painted frieze, see C. Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, *Βεργίνα. Ο τάφος του Φιλίππου. Η τοιχογραφία με το κυνήγι*. (Athens: Archaeological Society of Athens, 2004).

50 With the notable exception of H.M. Franks, *Hunters, Heroes, Kings* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies, 2012) but see the review of O. Palagia, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 134 (2014): 255–256.

51 For a detailed discussion of these issues, see Borza and Palagia, "Chronology", 90–103.

52 Andronikos, *Vergina*, 221–222.

53 Andronikos, *Vergina*, 218–233. For recent summaries of the arguments in favour of Philip II, see D. Ignatiadou, "Royal Identities and Political Symbolism in the Vergina Lion-Hunt Painting", *Archaiologikon Deltion* 57 A' (2010): 119–154; R. Lane Fox, "Introduction: Dating the Royal Tombs at Vergina", in *Brill's Companion to Ancient Macedon*, ed. R. Lane Fox (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 1–34.

54 P.H. Lehmann, "The So-Called Tomb of Philip II: A Different Interpretation", *American Journal of Archaeology* 84 (1980): 527–531.



FIGURE 6.4 *Painted frieze on the façade of Vergina Tomb II, late 4th century BC. Detail of Alexander.*

PHOTO: HANS R. GOETTE

and that Tomb II contained the remains of Philip III and his wife. Both royal couples were murdered and buried within 20 years of one another,⁵⁵ a time span that is sometimes difficult to detect on archaeological evidence. The argument in favour of Philip III is based on the military equipment of his wife,

55 Philip II died in 336, Philip III in 317 and was buried in 316.

the iconography of the gold and ivory couch from the ante-chamber showing a battle of Greeks and Persians which would have been inappropriate for Philip II who never fought in Persia, the device of Achilles and Penthesilea on the gold and ivory shield which seems to echo a shield given to Alexander on Roman coins, and on the appearance of a lion and bear hunt on the façade which points to events from Alexander's Asian campaign.⁵⁶

Alexander appears in splendid isolation at the centre of the frieze, flanked by two leafless trees, wearing a purple chiton with an overfall, perhaps a version of his quasi-Oriental chiton mentioned above, and about to thrust his javelin at the lion which is at some distance, surrounded by a group of hunters. He is crowned with laurel which must have a special significance since hunters did not wear wreaths. It is probably a sign of heroization.⁵⁷ Alexander's central position in the scene, even though he is too young to be the tomb's owner,⁵⁸ indicates his pivotal role in the political message conveyed by the painting. Whoever is buried in the tomb knew Alexander and was dependent on him in some way.⁵⁹

280–30 BC

Coins

On coins issued during the reign of Agathocles of Bactria (ca. 190–170 BC) the head of Heracles wearing a lion scalp on the obverse of Alexander's original coins⁶⁰ is adapted into a portrait of Alexander, named and subtly used to

56 Tomb II attributed to Philip III Arrhidaeus: Palagia, "Hephaestion's Pyre"; Borza and Palagia, "Chronology" with earlier references. For fresh arguments and discussion of new issues, including those arising from the forensic examinations of the man's and woman's bones, see O. Palagia, "The Argeads: Archaeological Evidence", in *The History of the Argeads—New Perspectives*, ed. S. Müller et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2017), 151–161.

57 Palagia, "Hephaestion's Pyre", 194–195. Laurel crown: Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, *Η τοιχογραφία με το κυνήγι*, 78.

58 Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, *Η τοιχογραφία με το κυνήγι*, 79. The most recent forensic examination of the cremated bones of the man buried in Tomb II has reached the conclusion that he was between 45 and 50 years of age: T. Antikas and L.K. Wynn-Antikas, "New Finds from the Remains in Tomb II at Aegae", *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* (2015).

59 Those who attribute Tomb II to Philip II explain Alexander's central role as Philip's heir and chief mourner, cf. Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, *Η τοιχογραφία με το κυνήγι*, 167–168.

60 See n. 14 above.

boost Agathocles' claim to the throne.⁶¹ Alexander's harsh features form a sharp contrast with his beautified appearance on the coinage of Lysimachus (Fig. 6.2).

Sculptures

Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt

A marble head of Alexander from Alexandria (Fig. 6.5), once inserted into a statue,⁶² is a softer and fleshier image of a rejuvenated and visionary Alexander, clearly created by a generation who had no first-hand experience of the conqueror and fashioned in accordance with the aesthetics of royal Ptolemaic portraiture. A bronze statuette of a horseman of the third century BC wearing an elephant skin and raising his right hand, perhaps wielding a sword, was found in Egypt and may well represent a youthful version of Alexander.⁶³

At some point in the third or second century BC Alexander's statue as founder of Alexandria was erected in the circular temple of Tyche not far from the Mouseion.⁶⁴ Alexander as world conqueror was being crowned by the Earth (Ge), who in her turn was crowned by Fortune (Tyche), thus advertising his famous fortune, also highlighted by the literary sources.⁶⁵

Attalid Kingdom of Asia Minor

Another youthful, romanticized version of Alexander, dated to the second half of the second century BC, is a marble statue found in the sanctuary of the Mother of the Gods in Magnesia on Sipylon (Fig. 6.6).⁶⁶ It was excavated alongside an inscribed orthostate from a statue base, signed by the sculptor

61 Dahmen, *Legend of Alexander*, 120–121, pl. 9.

62 London, British Museum 1857. Smith, *Royal Portraits*, 62; Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 424, fig. 124.

63 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 55.11.11. Edith Perry Chapman Fund, 1955. K. Rho-miopolou et al., *The Search for Alexander* (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1980), 123, no. 46; C.A. Picón and S. Hemingway, *Pergamon and the Hellenistic Kingdoms of the Ancient World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016), 111, no. 12.

64 Pseudo-Libanios (Nikolaos Rhetor), *Progymnasmata* 25 (vol. 7, 530–531). Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 383–384, T 95; M. Pfrommer, "Durch Orakel zum Pharao", in *Alexander der Grosse*, ed. R. Gebhard et al. (Darmstadt and Mainz: von Zabern, 2013), fig. on p. 61 (imaginary reconstruction).

65 Cf. Plutarch, *On the Fortune or Virtue of Alexander*.

66 Istanbul Archaeological Museum 709. G. Mendel, *Catalogue des sculptures grecques, romaines et byzantines* II (Istanbul, 1914), 249–253, no. 536; Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 427, fig. 133; H.-H. von Prittwitz und Gaffron, "Die hellenistische Plastik von 160 bis 120 v. Chr.", in *Die Geschichte der antiken Bildhauerkunst* III, ed. P.C. Bol (Mainz: von Zabern, 2007), 247, fig. 206.



FIGURE 6.5 *A marble head of Alexander from Alexandria, once inserted into a statue, 2nd century BC*
LONDON, BRITISH MUSEUM 1857. PHOTO: HANS R. GOETTE

Menas of Pergamon.⁶⁷ The base, however, was accompanied by fragments of more statues, it cannot therefore be associated with Alexander with any degree of certainty. Magnesia in the second century belonged to the Attalids. It would be more interesting to know the occasion and the dedicant of such a statue. He is shown standing, crowned with a wreath of metallic leaves, legs draped, holding an upturned sword in his left hand. His right arm is lost but it may have held a sceptre. The imagery does not conform to the usual patterns for

67 S. Kansteiner et al., *Der Neue Overbeck IV* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), no. 3459.



FIGURE 6.6

A marble statue found in the sanctuary of the Mother of the Gods in Magnesia on Sipylon, dated to the second half of the 2nd century BC

ISTANBUL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM 709.

PHOTO: HANS R. GOETTE

Alexander: the draped legs are reminiscent of divine figures, and the idea of the ruler in the guise of Zeus is embodied in the statue of Attalus II from the sanctuary of Hera at Pergamon.⁶⁸ It can therefore be argued that Alexander's image here is more akin to the iconography of the late Attalids.

68 Istanbul Archaeological Museum 2767. von Prittwitz und Gaffron, "Hellenistische Plastik", 243, fig. 198b.

A colossal head of Alexander from Pergamon itself, however, harks back to the tortured image of the world-weary conqueror devised by Lysippos.⁶⁹ Its style is similar to the Great Altar of Pergamon, dated to the second quarter of the second century and it was once thought to belong to its Gigantomachy frieze. But it was clearly part of a free-standing portrait of Alexander, whose presence in any of the kingdoms of the Successors was almost obligatory.

Mainland Greece

The Greek cities, on the other hand, had no compelling reason to celebrate the memory of Alexander; nevertheless, we have two outstanding portraits from Olympia and Athens. The head found in Volantza (Fig. 6.7) near the panhellenic sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia⁷⁰ has the furrowed brow and pathetic expression of the Pergamon Alexander, while his rope-like, deeply drilled locks of hair recall the Giants of the Gigantomachy frieze on the Great Altar of Pergamon.⁷¹ A head found near the Erechtheion on the Athenian Acropolis⁷² has long been considered a fourth-century original or a copy thereof, representing the young Alexander as crown prince until it was pointed out that its striated hairlocks do not appear before the mid-second century BC⁷³ and that the head must have belonged to a herm on account of its stiff neck.⁷⁴ It seems that there was a Hellenistic prototype of an idealized, youthful Alexander that was also copied in two other marble heads of the Roman period, one in Berlin, the other in Schloss Erbach.⁷⁵ We do not know the original location of the prototype but it may well have been Athens.

69 Istanbul Archaeological Museum 1138. Mendel, *Catalogue*, 254–255, no. 538; Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 332–333 and 428, figs. 128–129; H. Schraudolph, “Beispiele hellenistischer Plastik der Zeit zwischen 190 und 160 v. Chr.,” in *Die Geschichte der antiken Bildhauerkunst* 111, ed. P.C. Bol (Mainz: von Zabern, 2007), 228, fig. 191a–d.

70 Olympia, Museum of the History of the Olympic Games A 245. Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 332 and 430, fig. 127.

71 E.g., Athena's opponent: Schraudolph, “Beispiele,” 197–203, fig. 175b; Trofimova, *Imitatio Alexandri*, fig. 151. On the stylistic affinity of the Pergamene portraits of Alexander to the Giants of the Great Altar of Pergamon, see Trofimova, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 125–132.

72 Athens, Acropolis Museum 1331. K. Fittschen, *Katalog der antiken Skulpturen in Schloss Erbach* (Berlin: Mann, 1977), 22, Beil. 22; Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 106–112, 421, col. pl. 1, fig. 5; Stewart, “Alexander in Greek and Roman art,” 35.

73 Fittschen, *Katalog*, 22.

74 E.B. Harrison, “New Sculpture from the Athenian Agora, 1959,” *Hesperia* 29 (1960): 387 n. 73.

75 Fittschen, *Katalog*, 21–25, pl. 8 (Schloss Erbach 642) and Beil. 3 (Berlin, Antikensmuseum K 203).



FIGURE 6.7 *Marble head of Alexander found in Volantza near the PanHellenic sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia, c. 2nd century BC*

MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF THE OLYMPIC
GAMES A 245. PHOTO: HANS R. GOETTE

Kingdom of Commagene

In the mid-first century BC, Alexander was advertised as a (spurious) ancestor of King Antiochus I of Commagene in his funerary monument at Nemrud Dagħ (modern Turkey), which comprised relief *stelai* with imaginary depictions of putative Macedonian and Persian ancestors.⁷⁶ Alexander was represented on a relief stele, now mostly broken, holding a *rhyton* and named as great king Alexander, son of Philip.

⁷⁶ Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 402, T 131; D.H. Sanders, ed., *Nemrud Dağı* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenrauns, 1996), 322–326, figs. 292, 1 and 495; H.A.G. Brijder, *Nemrud Dağı* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), 376, fig. 226,1. Antiochus I claimed descent from the Persian Apama, wife of Seleucus I, who was a fictitious daughter of Alexander.

Conclusion

After his death, Alexander was celebrated as the founder of the dynastic kingdoms that sprang up after the breakup of his empire and his image was used to reinforce the legitimacy of his Successors. He had a special role to play in Alexandria as founder of the city that sheltered his body and as participant of the dynastic cult of the Ptolemies. His contemporaries fashioned their image using him as a prototype but in later periods his posthumous portraits began to follow the patterns set by local ruling houses. His evolving picture passed from realism to rejuvenation and deification without losing its appeal as the embodiment of the youthful conquering hero.

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Metalexandron: Receptions of Alexander in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds*

Shane Wallace

Imitating Alexander

Alexander is a product of later ages. The surviving literary sources—Diodorus Siculus, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Plutarch, Arrian, Justin—all wrote under the Roman Empire, from around the mid-first century BC to the start of the third century AD; almost all contemporary and Hellenistic historiography pertaining to Alexander is lost. Alexander, as we have him, is mostly a construct of the Roman world and is, therefore, open to continuous reinterpretation. By the late first century BC an alternate history had developed hypothesizing what would have happened had Alexander survived to invade Italy. Livy's unsurprising conclusion was that like Pyrrhus and Hannibal he would have failed to conquer the Romans.¹

Although his relevance in the Roman world has been doubted by some, Alexander exerted a strong influence on his Hellenistic and Roman successors. His afterlife in the Greek and Roman worlds has been much studied, but scholarship has generally focused on the importance of Alexander's image for individual rulers or during specific historical periods and has invariably focused on imperial image making.² In this chapter I challenge both these

* I would like to thank to Andrew Erskine for his many useful comments and unhesitating willingness to read my work. Versions of this paper were presented as research seminars at Trinity College Dublin and the University of Newcastle. It has benefitted greatly from the input of both audiences.

- 1 Livy 9.16.19–19.17; Plut. *Pyrrh.* 19.2 Amm. Marc. 30.8.5; Flor. 1.23.2; cf. Julian. *Ep.* 47 [433c]; Hans Rudolf Breitenbach, "Der Alexanderkurs bei Livius", *Museum Helveticum* 26 (1969); Ruth Morello, "Livy's Alexander Digression (9.17–19): Counterfactuals and Apologetics", *Journal of Roman Studies* 92 (2002); Nikolaus Overtoom, "A Roman Tradition of Alexander the Great Counterfactual History", *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 52 (2012).
- 2 The bibliography is voluminous but see, in addition to the many relevant books and articles cited throughout this chapter, Dorothea Michel, *Alexander als Vorbild für Pompeius, Caesar und Marcus Antonius. Archäologische Untersuchungen* (Brussels: Latomus, 1967); Otto

trends by examining Alexander's reception thematically and by exploring the use of his name and image by subjects in their negotiations with ruling powers. By approaching the evidence from a different direction, this paper reveals new connections within the sources and new perspectives on Alexander's ancient reception. My focus is on the role that receptions of Alexander the Great played in the interaction between rulers and subjects, kings and cities. I explore three aspects of Alexander's reception. The first section, 'Inventing Alexander', examines invented or false claims to contact with Alexander. The second, 'Localizing Alexander', looks at Alexander's local reception in three cities: Ephesus, Ilium, and Rome. The third, 'Worshipping Alexander', explores the afterlife of Alexander cults from the third century BC to the third century AD. Throughout each of these sections I examine the dynamics of Alexander's reception in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds, how it was local and adaptive, yet culturally and geographically diverse. My primary focus, however, is on its role in relations between ruler and subject.

There are some methodological principles that need to be followed. In general terms we can distinguish between historic and historiographic imitation of Alexander, that is when an individual imitates or emulates Alexander and when an author makes a comparison between Alexander and an individual.³ Peter Green has expanded this picture somewhat by dividing engagement with Alexander into three types: *imitatio*, which is an imitation of a specific action, *aemulatio*, which is a general desire to rival or surpass, and *comparatio*, which is comparison between two individuals by an author.⁴ The suitability of such Latin terms, each with an English counterpart with its own specific meaning, to

Weippert, *Alexander-imitatio und römische Politik in republikanischer Zeit* (Augsburg: Augsburg-Julius-Maximilians-Universität, 1972); Claudia Bohm, *Imitatio Alexandri im Hellenismus: Untersuchungen zum politischen Nachwirken Alexanders des Großen in hoch- und späthellenistischen Monarchien* (Munich: Verlag V. Florentz, 1989); Jean-Michel Croisille, ed., *Nero-nia IV: Alejandro Magno, modelo de los emperadores romanos* (Brussels: Latomus, 1990); Diane Spenser, *The Roman Alexander: Reading a Cultural Myth* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2002); Elias Koulakiotis, *Genese und Metamorphosen des Alexandermythos im Spiegel der griechischen nichthistoriographischen Überlieferung bis zum 3. Jh. n. Chr.* (Konstanz: UVK Verlag, 2006); Angela Kühnen, *Die Imitatio Alexandri in der römischen Politik (1. Jh. v. Chr.–3. Jh. n. Chr.)* (Münster: Rhema Verlag, 2008).

3 A distinction made by J.S. Richardson, Review of *Alexander-imitatio und römische Politik in republikanischer Zeit*, by Otto Weippert, *Journal of Roman Studies* 64 (1974) and expanded in Peter Green, "Caesar and Alexander: *aemulatio*, *imitatio*, and *comparatio*", *American Journal of Ancient History* 3 (1978), though it is worth remembering that even historic *imitatio* is historiographic since our knowledge of it comes almost exclusively from written sources.

4 Green, "Caesar and Alexander".

ancient Greek thought can be debated and Green's classification can certainly be nuanced, but they offer useful ways of thinking about the evidence, provided they are not applied too rigorously.⁵

Receptions of Alexander were culturally adaptive and differed from the Hellenistic East to the Roman West. Republican generals such as Pompey and Caesar could not imitate or emulate Alexander in the same way as Hellenistic monarchs, who, for instance, often claimed direct descent from him. Alexander-*imitatio* also developed associated connections over time. Roman imitation of Alexander at Ilium developed alongside Roman kinship relations with the Trojans. Imitation of Alexander sometimes entailed imitation of his heroic predecessors, so when Caracalla sacrificed at Ilium he was both imitating Alexander and paralleling himself with Achilles.⁶ Scholarship has traditionally focused on how the 'big men' of history engaged with Alexander's memory, but on a more local level cities and individuals took part in the same process. Cities such as Ilium and Ephesus had local traditions of benefactions made or actions undertaken by Alexander and so acted as *lieux des mémoire* for imitative behaviour by his successors. The local audience at such centres was important since Alexander-*imitatio* was a process of negotiation and the city's local memory of Alexander could condition how a ruler acted.

Inventing Alexander

Connections or associations with Alexander were useful and were sought from the moment he died. Control of Alexander's body, brother, child, wife, and army were sought and gained by Perdiccas in the immediate aftermath of Alexander's death, though Ptolemy was able to gain control of Alexander's body, which marked him as the king's successor. Alexander's body became an important feature of Hellenistic Alexandria, and was used by the city in its negotiations with the Roman emperors.⁷ Alexander's Successors used his image widely on their coins, founded cities in his name, and in some cases named their children

5 Rowland Smith, "The Casting of Julian the Apostate 'in the Likeness' of Alexander the Great. A *Topos* in Antique Historiography and its Modern echoes", *Histos* 5 (2011): 48–49.

6 Regarding the issue of Alexander's own *imitatio* and *aemulatio*, see Sabine Müller, "Die Problematik der Nachahmung—*imitatio* und *aemulatio* bei Alexander III. von Makedonien", in *Plagiate. Fälschungen, Imitate und andere Strategien aus zweiter Hand*, ed. Jochen Bung et al. (Berlin: Trafo, 2009).

7 Perdiccas: Shane Wallace, "Court, Kingship, and Royal Style in the Early Hellenistic Period", in *The Hellenistic Court: Monarchic Power and Elite Society from Alexander to Cleopatra*, ed. Andrew Erskine, Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, and Shane Wallace (Swansea: Classical Press of

after him.⁸ His wife Rhoxane made dedications at the Athenian Panathenaea, perhaps in 318 (*IG* II² 1492, ll. 45–57; *SEG* LIII/1 172), while Craterus displayed himself hunting with Alexander, “Asia’s much-praised monarch”, in the lion monument at Delphi (*FD* III (4) 137; *Plut. Alex.* 40.3–4). Connections with Alexander had practical consequences. Pyrrhus of Epirus was compared with Alexander, particularly in regards to his martial valour, which ensured his popularity with the Macedonian soldiers of Demetrius Poliorcetes, who merely copied Alexander’s dress and luxurious tastes (*Plu. Pyrrh.* 8.1; *Demetr.* 44). Lysimachus’ personal connection with Alexander, however, trumped Pyrrhus’ *imitatio* causing Pyrrhus’ troops to abandon him for one of the last survivors of Alexander’s Successors (*Plu. Pyrrh.* 12.6–7).⁹

Connections were also made at a non-royal level. In his delightful series of vignettes, the *Characters*, Theophrastus describes “the boastful man” (XXIII), who would regale his companion with stories of how he fought with and knew Alexander. Such personal connections are widely emphasized in dedications by or honours for those who knew or fought with Alexander.¹⁰ Cities too emphasized their connections with Alexander. Rhodes recorded his dedications to Athena Lindia (*I.Lindos* 2, ll. 103–109 [XXXVIII]), while Priene (*GHI* 86b = *IK.Priene* 1), Colophon (*Mauerbauinschriften* 69, ll. 6–7), and Erythrae (*IK.Erythrai* 31, ll. 22–23) all cited his guarantees of freedom (*eleutheria*) and/or autonomy (*autonomia*) in later inscriptions; other cities remembered Alexander as a guarantor of democracy.¹¹ Cilician Soli used its connection with Alexander to ensure the weakening of royal billeting by a Ptolemaic or Seleucid

Wales, 2017), §§ 2–6. Alexander’s body: Andrew Erskine, “Life after Death: Alexandria and the Body of Alexander”, *Greece & Rome* 49 (2002).

8 Karsten Dahmen, *The Legend of Alexander the Great on Greek and Roman Coins* (London: Routledge, 2007). Antigoneia in the Troad was re-founded as Alexandria Troas by Lysimachus, see Getzl M. Cohen, *The Hellenistic Settlements in Europe, the Islands, and Asia Minor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 145–148. Cassander, Lysimachus, and Perseus of Macedon all had sons named Philip and Alexander, see Daniel Ogden, *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death: The Hellenistic Dynasties* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 1999), 54–57, 57–62, 187–189.

9 Sulochana Asirvatham, “The Memory of Alexander in Plutarch’s *Lives* of Demetrius, Pyrrhus and Eumenes”, in *Power, Kingship and Memory in Ancient Macedonian History*, ed. Timothy Howe and Francesca Pownall (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, Forthcoming).

10 Philonides of Crete: *I.Olympia* 276–277. Cavalry from Thespieae and Orchomenos: *AP* 6.344; *IG* VII 3206; cf. *SEG* XXIX 552. Gorgos of Iasos: *GHI* 90b; *IG* IV (2) 616–617; *IK.Iasos* 24+30. Antigonos son of Kallas: *ISE* 113. Archon of Pella: *GHI* 92. Aenetos of Rhodes: *Agora* XVI 101. Thersippus of Nesos: *IG* XII (2) 645 = *IK.Adramytteion* 34. Antigonid officer on Samos: *IG* XII (6) 28. A Macedonian soldier in Egypt: *P.Hibeh* 30.

11 Shane Wallace, “Alexander the Great and Democracy in the Hellenistic World”, in *The Hel-*

king in the late third century BC.¹² However, for cities that did not have some connection with Alexander the Great to draw upon—a visit, benefaction, dedication, or letter—the temptation to invent one must have been great. Decades or centuries after his death it would have been nearly impossible to disprove the authenticity of a letter or dedication claimed to have been sent or made by Alexander.

There are a number of cases of invented traditions where a city's claim that Alexander visited it is unlikely or can be proven false. A dedication from the Lycian city of Xanthus by "King Alexander" has been argued by Jean and Louis Robert to be an ancient fake (*SEG* XXX 1533; *BE* (1980) num. 487). Citing the poor quality of the inscription and the appearance of Ἀλέξανδρος βασιλεὺς rather than the more expected βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξανδρος, they suggest that the dedication might have been invented by the Xanthians at a later date to recall the king's earlier passage through Lycia, which took him close to Xanthus.¹³ For a later audience, a visit to or dedication at Xanthus by Alexander would have been eminently plausible. An 'altar' from the temple of Alexander at the Bahariya oasis, located roughly halfway between Siwah and Memphis, records a dedication by "King Alexander to his father Ammon"; it too might have been inscribed to record an invented visit.¹⁴ Josephus records that Alexander visited Jerusalem and made obeisance to the High Priest. The story is fiction, but it emphasized Jerusalem's importance and would have been a precedent for negotiations with Alexander's successors.¹⁵ The story has perhaps found

lenistic Reception of Classical Athenian Politics and Political Thought, ed. Mirko Canavaro and Benjamin Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

- 12 Welles *RC* 30 = Austin *HW* 279; Biagio Virgilio, *Le Roi Écrit. Le Correspondance du Soverain hellénistique, suivie de Deux Lettres d'Antiochos III à Partir de Louis Robert et d'Adolf Wilhelm* (Pisa: Fabrizio Serra editore, 2011), 179–266; Wallace, "Alexander and democracy", 66.
- 13 Arr. *An.* 1.24.4; Paul Goukowsky, *Essai sur les origines du mythe d'Alexandre (336–270 avant J.-C.). II: Alexandre et Dionysos* (Nancy: Université de Nancy, 1981), 113–117. The bronze plaque allegedly found at Xanthus and forecasting Alexander's destruction of the Persian Empire is perhaps part of the same invented tradition (Plut. *Alex.* 17.4–5).
- 14 *SEG* LIX 1764: βασιλεὺς | Ἀλέξ(α)νδρος | Ἄμμωνι | τ[ῷ] πατρί. Alexander's pharaonic titulary is also recorded in hieroglyphs, see Francisco Bosch-Puche, "L'autel' du temple d'Alexandre le Grand à Bahariya retrouvé", *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 108 (2008): 29–44.
- 15 J. *AJ* 11.8.4–7 (398); Peter Schäfer, *The History of the Jews in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2003), 5–7; Seth Schwartz, *The Ancient Jews from Alexander to Muhammad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 30–31. Pierre Briant, *The First European. A History of Alexander in the Age of Empire* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2017), 61–67 traces later receptions of Josephus' account. For Alexander in Jewish texts, see Aleksandra Kłęczar in this volume.

its way into the Jewish iconographic record. A recently discovered mosaic from the synagogue at Huqoq, Israel, has been suggested to depict just this meeting between a High Priest and Alexander, portrayed as a bearded ruler with purple cloak and diadem.¹⁶ The meeting also features on the reverse of a bronze medallion of Pope Paul III from AD 1545/6 by Alessandro Cesati.¹⁷ Other examples of invented traditions abound. Mithridates gave one hundred talents to Apamea after a particularly devastating earthquake because he believed, almost certainly with the city's persuasion, that Alexander had earlier acted similarly (Str. 12.8.18). In the Senatorial review of AD 22 Sardis claimed *asylia* (sacred inviolability) through "a grant by the victorious Alexander" (Tac. *Ann.* 3.63), but according to Arrian (*An.* 1.17.4) Alexander granted Sardis *eleutheria* and "the use of the old Lydian customs" in 334. By AD 22 such might have been taken to refer to *asylia*. In the third century AD numerous cities in the Roman east claimed to have been founded by Alexander.¹⁸ The claim that the Romans

- 16 The excavations at Huqoq, led by Prof. Jodi Magness (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) brought to light in 2013 and 2014 a mosaic on the eastern aisle of the synagogue, more than 11 feet wide. It contains three bands of imagery: soldiers with shields and spear, war-elephants, aftermath of a battle. The top band shows two men meeting, one wearing a white robe, the other wearing armour, a purple cloak, and a diadem. An army with elephants is depicted in the background.

"Huqoq—2013", The Israeli Antiquities Authority, accessed May 25, 2016, http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/Report_Detail_Eng.aspx?id=12648. "Explore This Mysterious Mosaic—It May Portray Alexander the Great", National Geographic, accessed September 10th, 2016, <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/09/mysterious-mosaic-alexander-the-great-israel/>

"Press Reports", Huqoq Excavation Project, accessed May 25, 2016, <http://huqoqexcavationproject.org/press-2/>.

The birth and education of Alexander forms the theme of a recently discovered fourth century AD mosaic from Baalbek (*SEG* LV 1594).

- 17 John Graham Pollard, *Italian Renaissance Medals in the Museo Nazionale of Bargello* (Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, Florence, 1984), 986–987 num. 524; Dahmen, *Legend of Alexander*, 155 pl. 29.1.
- 18 Aegea in Cilicia: Cohen, *Hellenistic Settlements*, 355–357. Otrous in Phrygia: *IGRRP* IV 692: Ἀλέξανδρον Μακεδόνᾱ | κτίστην τῆς πόλεως; Philippe-Ernest Legrand and Joseph Chamonard, "Inscriptions de Phrygie", *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 17 (1893): 277–278; William Ramsey, *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1897), 702–703; Cohen, *Hellenistic Settlements*, 422. Capitolas in Arabia: *RPC* IV 6564: ΑΛΕΞ(ΑΝΔΡΟΣ) ΜΑΚΕ(ΔΩΝ) ΓΕΝΑΡ(ΧΗΣ); Kent J. Rigsby, *Asylia. Territorial Inviolability in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 538–539 with n. 30. Apollonia Mordiaion in Pidas: ΑΛΕΞΑ(ΝΔΡΟΣ) ΚΤΙΣ(ΤΗΣ) ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΙΑ(ΤΩΝ); François Rebuffat, "Alexandre le Grand et Apollonia de Pisidie", *Revue Numismatique* 28 (1986).

sent an embassy to Alexander in 324, made by both Greek and Roman authors, is plausible but impossible to prove.¹⁹

Amisus' claim to Lucullus in 71BC that Alexander had awarded the city democracy is also perhaps fictitious and may have been designed to exert moral force over Lucullus by compelling him to confirm the actions of his great predecessor.²⁰ The process was reciprocal, ruler and city drew on Alexander's memory but for different ends. Amisus used Alexander's precedent to pressure Lucullus to act according to a civic model of Hellenistic kingship and grant the city a status benefaction, but in doing so Lucullus used Alexander's example to assert his control over Amisus and reaffirm his right to grant status benefactions to subject cities.²¹ Each channelled Alexander's example differently with each acting as the other's audience. Alexander's precedent offered a successful model for the interaction between ruler and city.

A city could also invent a connection with Alexander for less overtly political reasons. When Pausanias visited Megalopolis in the late second century AD he was shown north of the river a stoa called the Philippeium, which "was not made by Philip, the son of Amyntas, but as a compliment to him the Megalopolitans gave his name to the building" (8.30.6). The stoa has been dated archaeologically to the third quarter of the fourth century BC and it appears that a statue of Philip with a consort of son stood outside it, in the agora

Gerasa (Jerash) in Jordan: ΑΛΕΞ(ΑΝΔΡΟΣ) ΜΑΚΕ(ΔΩΝ) ΚΤΙΣ(ΤΗΣ) ΓΕΡΑΣΩΝ; Augusto Spijkerman, *The Coins of the Decapolis and Provincia Arabia* (Franciscan Printing Press: Jerusalem, 1978), 164 num. 29, 31; Smyrna: Paus. 7.5.2; Dietrich Klose, *Die Münzprägung von Smyrna in der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1987), 36, 257–258, 308, 313. See, in general, Dahmen, *Legend of Alexander*, 123–134.

19 Clitarch. *FGrH* 137 F31; Memn. *FGrH* 434 F1§ 18.2 (dating it to 334); Arr. *An.* 7.15.5–16 (dating it to 324); Plin. *HN* 3.57; Just. *Epit.* 12.13.1 (cf. D.S. 17.113.1–2). Weippert, *Alexander-imitatio*, 1–10 claims that "ihre Historizität hängt ... mit der datierung des Kleitarchos zusammen", whom we now know wrote in the late third century BC (*P.Oxy.* LXXI 4808). Diplomatic relations were opened between Rome and Ptolemaic Egypt by 273, see Livy. *Per.* 14; Just. *Epit.* 18.2.9; Val. Max. 4.3.9; Eutr. 2.15; D.H. 20.14; D.C. F41; Zonar. 8.6; Leslie Neatby, "Romano-Egyptian Relations during the Third Century BC", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 81 (1950). It now seems that Rome did indeed collaborate with the Rhodians to suppress piracy as early as the late fourth century BC, see Plb. 30.5.6–8 with Nathan Badoud, "Note sur trois inscriptions mentionnant des Rhodiens morts à la guerre. Contribution à l'étude des relations entre Rhodes et Rome à la fin du ive s. av. J.-C.", *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 139–140 (2015–2016).

20 App. *Mith.* 12.83 [373–374]; Wallace, "Alexander and democracy", 66–68.

21 For literary *comparatio* between Lucullus and Alexander, see Cic. *Acad.* 2.3.

(SEG XLVIII 521).²² Bricks have also been found from this stoa inscribed with Philip's name (*IG V* (2) 469, l. 6). South of the river, near the foundations of the *bouleuterion*, Pausanias was shown "the house of Alexander", in front of which stood a herm of Ammon (8.32.1). Fredricksmeyer argued that this "house of Alexander" was a temple to Alexander that had survived since the 320s, but Calder has shown quite convincingly that it was a local forgery, an invention designed to attract and dupe tourists such as Pausanias.²³ The phenomenon was widespread. Diogenes Laertius (6.88) claims that Alexander once stayed in the philosopher Crates' house²⁴ while Appian (*Mith.* 3.20 [76]) records that Mithridates spent the night in an inn in Phrygia that Alexander had once visited. In Gortys, just north of Megalopolis, Pausanias was shown a breastplate and spear that Alexander had "as the locals say" (λέγουσι δὲ οἱ ἐπιχώριοι) dedicated in the Temple of Asclepius (8.28.1).²⁵ Plutarch records that even in his time there was an oak tree by the Cephissus River near Chaeronea by which, the locals claimed, Alexander pitched his tent (*Plu. Alex.* 9.2).²⁶ Dio Cassius claims that Trajan visited the room in which Alexander had died in Babylon (68.30.1).²⁷ There was a large and widespread audience for Alexander memorials in antiquity, and attributions such as these were local inventions designed to attract tourists, promote business, or give a small town a little bit of celebrity sparkle. They could also, at times, reflect earlier political relations. Megalopolis, for instance, had maintained close relations with Macedon throughout the

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- 22 Hans Lauter and Theodoros Spyropoulos, "Megalopolis. 3, Vorbericht 1996–1997", *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1998); Hans Lauter, "Megalopolis: Ausgrabungen aus der Agora 1991–2002", in *Ancient Arcadia*, ed. Erik Østby (Athens: Norwegian Institute at Athens, 2005).
 - 23 Christian Habicht, *Gottmenschentum und griechische Städte* (Munich: Beck, 1970), 29 n. 3 ("Es ist ungewiß"); Ernst Fredricksmeyer, "Three Notes on Alexander's Deification", *American Journal of Ancient History* 4 (1979); Nicholas G.L. Hammond and Frank W. Walbank, *A History of Macedonia*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 82 n. 3; William M. Calder, "Alexander's House", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 23 (1982).
 - 24 The story is undoubtedly a literary fiction and perhaps echoes the claim that Alexander left Pindar's house standing when Thebes was destroyed (*Arr. An.* 1.9.10; *Plu. Alex.* 11.12; *D.Chr.* 2.33).
 - 25 Arthur Darby Nock, review of *Asclepius: A Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies*, by Emma J. Edelstein and Levy Edelstein, *Classical Philology* 45 (1950): 49 n. 31: "that may be legend."
 - 26 A site known as *castra Alexandri* existed in norther Sinai (*Curt.* 4.7.2) while a place known as ἡ τε Ἀλλεξανδρου παρεμβολή was located near the Siwa Oasis (*Ptolemy* 4.5.33).
 - 27 For the Alexander-motif in Cassius Dio, see now Christopher T. Mallan, "The Spectre of Alexander: Cassius Dio and the Alexander-motif," *Greece and Rome* 64 (2017).

third century BC, a fact reflected in the numerous Argead-attributed monuments that Pausanias saw in and around the city.²⁸

As with relics from the heroic past, artefacts from Alexander's campaigns appeared throughout the Greek east and formed important links with the past for the states that housed them.²⁹ Such artefacts were transportable so a dedication by Alexander could easily become a rededication by someone else. This is what happened when Augustus moved to Rome from Cyme in Aeolis spoils from the destruction of Thebes that Alexander had earlier dedicated (Plin. *NH* 34.14).³⁰ Augustus placed Alexander's dedication, a ceiling lamp with lights arranged to look like apples on a tree, in the temple of Apollo Palatinus in Rome, which Augustus himself dedicated in 28 BC. Alexander's dedication from a medising Greek city had perhaps symbolized Cyme's liberation from Persian control, but by moving the dedication to Rome Augustus emphasized his control over Cyme and other Greek cities.³¹ What might have symbolized Alexander's liberation now symbolized Augustus' control. The removal of Alexander's dedication also removed a well-known tourist attraction and a bargaining tool that Cyme could have used in negotiations to show its privileged status under Alexander.³² The favouritism that Alexander had showed the city, which his dedication continually displayed, was gone.

A similar situation existed at the temple of Artemis in Elymais in southern Iran which, as Josephus tell us, was full of rich dedications as well as weapons

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- 28 Manuela Mari and John Thornton, "Città greche tra conservazione e modelli rivoluzionari. Megalopoli, Larisa e i re Macedoni nel iii secolo a.C.," in *Studi ellenistici xxx*, ed. Basilio Virgilio (Pisa/Roma: Fabrizio Serra editore, 2016).
 - 29 On the relics and bones attributed to heroes, see Adrienne Mayor, *The First Fossil Hunters. Paleontology in Greek and Roman Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); John Boardman, *The Archaeology of Nostalgia. How the Greeks Re-Created their Mythical Past* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2002), 33–43.
 - 30 Cyme on Euboea cannot be excluded, see Mogens Hansen and Thomas Heine Nielsen, *An Inventory of Archaic and Greek Poleis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 645. Alexander's connection with Aeolic Cyme might also be apparent in a series of busts dating from c. 125–75 BC that could have come from a statue group depicting Alexander, Hephaestion, and Roxane, see Andrew Stewart, *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 336–337, 426–427, with figs. 136–138.
 - 31 For the psychological effect that the removal of artworks had on subject peoples, see Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.59, cf. 2.2.87; Plb. 9.10.
 - 32 Monuments such as these mattered to small cities. According to Cicero (*Verr.* 4.4, 135), Praxiteles' statue of Cupid was the only reason anyone visited Thespiae. The statue of Diana was a major attraction at Segesta (Cic. *Verr.* 4.74–79).

and breastplates dedicated by Alexander (J. *AJ* 12.9 [354–355]). Antiochus IV attacked the temple but was unsuccessful. For Josephus, Antiochus sought to take both its rich votives and the arms dedicated by Alexander, which had their own value.³³ The symbolic power of such dedications was strong. After his defeat at the Battle of Pydna in 168 BC, Perseus of Macedon sought the return of some “gold plate of Alexander the Great” (Plu. *Aem.* 23.9) held by a group of Cretans—Diodorus Siculus (30.21.1–4) calls them “objects made from the spoils captured by Alexander”.³⁴ These objects were obviously of financial and symbolic importance to Perseus, hence his concern with getting them back, but both Diodorus and Plutarch use them in moralizing digressions to compare Alexander’s generosity with Perseus’ frugality (apparent also at Plu. *Aem.* 12; Livy 44.26–27), Alexander’s success with Perseus’ failure. Similarly, Dio Cassius (20.24) and Livy (42.45.7, 52.11) compare Aemilius Paullus with Perseus and claim that in defeating Perseus Aemilius Paullus had also defeated Philip, Alexander, and the Macedonian empire they had left behind.³⁵

Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors were fascinated by the *spolia* of Alexander’s campaigns, which could be put to use in pursuance of their own objectives, as when Eumenes employed what he claimed were Alexander’s throne, tent, and regalia to reinforce his control over the fragile satrapal alliance in Cilicia and Susiana in 318/7.³⁶ The Romans, however, brought many items associated with Alexander back to Rome, where they assumed new importance within Roman imperial image-making. The two examples of Pompey and Caligula, recently treated by David Woods, are instructive. During his triumph of September 28th–29th 61 BC, Pompey wore what he claimed was the cloak of Alexander the Great, which he had found among Mithridates’ possessions on the island of Cos (App. *Mith.* 17.117 [577]).³⁷ Almost a hundred years to the day later, on September 28th AD 39, Caligula rode his horse across the

33 For Seleucid plundering of native temples, see now Michael Taylor, “Sacred Plunder and the Seleucid Near East”, *Greece and Rome* 61 (2014). For a fragment of a bronze shield dedicated at Dodona perhaps by a βασι[λέως | Ἀλεξάν]δρου, see Σωτηρίου 1. Δάκαρη, “Ἀνασκαφή τοῦ ἱεροῦ τῆς Δωδώνης”, *Πρακτικά τῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας* 125 (1973): 93–94 (with image); *SEG* XLIII 1276.

34 Caracalla used weapons and cups that he believed had belonged to Alexander (D.C. 78.7–8).

35 Earlier Antigonids were also connected with Alexander. Apollonphanes, a courtier of Antigonos Doson, used to say that when Antigonos was successful his fortune ‘Alexandriized’ (FGrH 81 F46 = Ath. *Deip.* 251d).

36 D.S. 18.60.4–61.3, 19.15.3–4; Wallace, “Court, Kingship, and Royal Style”, § 2.

37 Weippert, *Alexander-imitatio*, 84–86; Devon Martin, “Did Pompey Engage in *imitatio Alexandri*?”, in *Studies in Latin History and Literature* IX, ed. Carl Deroux (Brussels: Lato-

Bay of Baiae wearing what was claimed to have been Alexander's breastplate (D.C. 59.17.3). Woods suggests that Caligula was imitating Pompey, not Alexander, and that the breastplate and cloak worn by Caligula were the same as those worn by Pompey a hundred years earlier.³⁸ Neither, he argues, had belonged to Alexander the Great, but to Ptolemy X Alexander I (or perhaps Ptolemy XI Alexander II), whose effects had been stored on the island of Cos by his mother Cleopatra III in the early first century BC. The relics used by Pompey and Caligula were, therefore, misattributions, not that it mattered for the purposes of historic *aemulatio*, and through their reuse by Pompey and Caligula they assumed new meanings within a Roman imperial context. Alexander's false relics facilitated Pompey's emulation of Alexander, already expressed through the epithet *Magnus*, and allowed Caligula to imitate Pompey emulating Alexander.³⁹

Links with Alexander were also made by private individuals. In 192 BC, in the build-up to Antiochus III's invasion of Greece, one Alexander of Megalopolis helped bring Amynder, the king of the Athamanians to Antiochus' side. Appian records that this Alexander was a Macedonian who had been educated at Megalopolis and had become a naturalized citizen; he declared himself to be a descendant of Alexander the Great and named his children Philip, Alexander, and Apama.⁴⁰ Both Livy and Appian doubt Alexander's claims, but they seem to have been widely acknowledged. Alexander married his daughter Apama to the king of the Athamanians and hoped through Antiochus' support to gain the Macedonian throne. The Delians recognized Alexander's descent in an honorary decree, calling him "Alexander, son of Philip, a descendant of King Alexander" and recording that he had spent some time on the island.⁴¹

mus, 1998), 41; Kühnen, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 70–71, 146–147. On Mithridates' emulation of Alexander, see Bohm, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 153–191.

38 David Woods, "Caligula, Pompey, and Alexander the Great", *Eranos* 104 (2006–2007); Bohm, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 134–147. Alfred Heuß, "Alexander der Große und das Problem der historischen Urteilsbildung", *Historische Zeitschrift* 225 (1977): 86 suggests that Nero may have worn this same cloak—*ueste purpurea distincta que stellis aureis chlamyde*—during his triumphal return to Rome in (Suet. *Nero* 25.1).

39 For Ptolemy's Alexander-*imitatio*, particularly his use of the epithet *Magnus*, see Michel, *Alexander als Vorbild*, 35–66. Martin, "Pompey", in contrast, argues that Pompey did not actively imitate Alexander.

40 App. *Syr.* 3.13 [50–52]; Livy 35.47.5–8; Bohm, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 5–26 analyses the career of Alexander of Megalopolis within the context of Antiochus' war with Rome. On Amynder, see Stewart Irvin Oost, "Amynder, Athamania, and Rome", *Classical Philology* 52 (1957).

41 IG XI (4) 750, ll. 3–4: Ἀλέξανδρος Φιλίππου, ἀπόγονος ὧν βασιλείῳς Ἀλεξάνδρου. The decree

The political context goes some way to explaining Alexander's claims to Argead descent. Alexander facilitated the alliance between Amynder and Antiochus, so it was in their interests to acknowledge his Argead descent. Philip v of Macedon had recently been defeated by Rome at the Battle of Cynoscephalae in 197 BC, so at a time of political upheaval Alexander's claim to Argead descent and his alliance with Antiochus tempted a weakened kingdom with an echo of past glory. Interestingly, Philip v was the first known Antigonid ruler of Macedon to claim Argead descent and "was at great pains to prove that he was allied in blood to Alexander and Philip" (Plb. 5.10.10; cf. Livy 27.30.9).⁴² Also, both Alexander of Megalopolis and Philip v named their daughters Apama, probably after Apama the wife of Seleucus I, who, by the late third century BC was considered by some to have been the daughter of Alexander the Great.⁴³ It would appear that Alexander's lineage was claimed by both Philip v of Macedon and Alexander of Megalopolis at the same time and for similar reasons of legitimacy.

Alexander's fictitious Argead descent was only one of a number of similar claims made during the second century BC. Alexander Balas of Smyrna claimed to be the son of Antiochus IV and Laodice IV and, after his claim was recognized by Rome and Ptolemy VI, who married his daughter Cleopatra Thea to him, he ruled the Seleucid Empire for the years 150–146 BC.⁴⁴ At the same time one Andrisus, from Adramyttium in Aeolis, claimed to be Perseus of Macedon's son and ruled Macedon as Philip VI in 149/8, before being defeated by Metellus Macedonicus.⁴⁵ In times of political upheaval, such as the disintegration of the

was proposed by Callias son of Antipater, whose likely son, Antipater son of Callias, later put to the vote a motion in honour of Aristobulus son of Athenaeus of Thessalonica, an associate of Demetrius II of Macedon and *proxenos* of the Delians (IG XI (4) 666). This Delian family appears to have had Macedonian connections. A third century BC Delian statue base for one "Alexander son of Philip" is too early to be identified with Alexander of Megalopolis (IG XI (4) 1092). A posthumous monument to Alexander the Great is more likely.

- 42 Kenneth R. Jones, "Alcaeus of Messene, Philip v, and the Colossus of Rhodes. A Re-Examination of *Anth. Pal.* 6.171", *Classical Quarterly* 64 (2014): 144–145; Bohm, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 32–51. Note also Frank Walbank, "Η ΤΩΜ ΟΛΩΝ ΕΛΠΙΣ and the Antigonids", in *Polybius, Rome and the Hellenistic World: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Frank Walbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), esp. 132–135.
- 43 William Woodthorpe Tarn, "Queen Ptolemais and Apama", *Classical Quarterly* 23 (1929); *The Greeks in Bactria in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 446–451; Michael Rostovtzeff, "ΠΡΟΓΟΝΟΙ", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 55 (1935): 63–66.
- 44 App. Syr. 11.67 [354–355]; Bohm, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 105–116.
- 45 Vell. Pat. 1.11.1–4; D.S. 32.9; Livy *Per.* 49, 50, 52.

old Hellenistic empires, false claims to kingship were not surprising. There were at least three people who claimed to be Nero between AD 69–96 and, according to St Augustine, there was a belief as late as the fifth century AD that Nero would return as the Antichrist (*De civ. D.* 20.19.3).⁴⁶

Numerous individuals claimed Argead or Aeacid descent were made during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, some even alleged direct descent from Alexander. Nicocreon, king of Cypriot Salamis, made a dedication at Argos c. 321–311 in which he claimed that his father, Pnytagoras, was Αἰάκου ἐκ γενεᾶς (*IG* IV 583 = *ISE* 38).⁴⁷ A second century BC inscription from Teos records a “Dionysius son of Pytheas, descendant of Alexander” (*SEG* II 581, l. 9). From the first century BC, a funerary epigram from the village of Makriyalos, near ancient Pydna, claims that the deceased Alcimachus, son of Neoptolemus, was a descendant of Olympias (*SEG* XII 340, l. 2: τῶν ἀπ’ Ὀλυμπιάδος) and presumably a member of the Aeacidae, like Nicocreon of Salamis. Edson connects this with another funerary epigram for one Neoptolemus that exhorted passers-by to stay and see the tomb of Olympias, which was clearly visible nearby (*SEG* XXXII 644).⁴⁸ By the first century BC, therefore, a family in the area of ancient Pydna claimed descent from Olympias, mother of Alexander the Great. At about the same time both Mithridates VI of Pontus (*Just. Epit.* 38.7.1) and Antiochus I of Commagene (*IGLSyr* I 24 = *OGIS* 398) claimed descent from Alexander. Such claims regain prominence in the third century AD. An inscription records that a city, possibly Otrous, was founded by a man named Alexander “the Macedonian”. This is probably the same Alexander who appears on Otrous’ coinage; his Macedonian descent may signify a claim to descent from Alexander the Great.⁴⁹ In the mid-third century AD Honoratianus Polycharmis of Athens explicitly claimed descent ἀπὸ Ἀλεξάνδρου [sic] (*1.Eleusis* 648 = *IG* II² 3679). Her father, Honoratianus Polycharmus, was a Macedonian from Beroea who had moved to Athens and married into the Claudii of Melite, who themselves claimed descent from Pericles and Conon.⁵⁰ Rowland Smith

46 Paul A. Gallivan, “The False Neros: A Re-Examination”, *Historia* 22 (1973).

47 Panos Christodoulou, “Nicokrēon, le dernier roi de Salamine de Chypre: discours idéologique et pouvoir politique”, *Cahiers du Centre d’Études Chypriotes* 39 (2009).

48 Charles Edson, “The Tomb of Olympias”, *Hesperia* 18 (1949). The terminology is similar to that of Alexander’s lineage in the first century AD Chigi Shield (*IG* XIV 1296, ll. 7–8): εἰμὶ δ’ ἀφ’ Ἡρακλέος Διὸς ἔκγονος, υἱὸς Φιλίππου | Αἰακιδῶν γενεῆς, μητρός Ὀλυμπιάδος. See now David Petrain, “The Archaeology of the Epigrams from the *Tabulae Italicae*: Adaptation, Allusion, Alteration”, *Mnemosyne* 65 (2012): 600–614.

49 *IGRRP* IV 692: Ἀλέξανδρον Μακεδόννα | κτίστην τῆς πόλεως; above n. 18.

50 Elias Kapetanopoulos, “An Athenian-Makedonian Marriage of Alexander’s Line”, *Balkan*

has recently argued that the fourth century AD Athenian historian Praxagoras of Athens (*FGrH* 219), who wrote a six-book history of Alexander, was a member of this extended family.⁵¹ Such claims continued into the second millennium AD. According to Marco Polo, the Mirs of Badakshan, a region covering what is today northeastern Afghanistan and southeastern Tajikistan, claimed descent from Alexander and a daughter of Darius (1.29).⁵² In Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King*, Daniel Dravot and Peachy Carnahan are identified by the natives of Kafiristan as sons of Alexander and Semiramis.⁵³

Localizing Alexander

Alexander-*imitatio* was both selective and culturally diverse. An individual obviously did not emulate Alexander in all aspects of his life, only in certain

Studies 31 (1990) [1992]; Sean G. Byrne, *Roman Citizens of Athens* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 299–300; Kevin Clinton, “A Family of Eumolpidai and Kerykes Descended from Pericles”, *Hesperia* 73 (2004): 55–56; Rowland Smith, “A Lost Historian of Alexander ‘Descended from Alexander’, and Read by Julian? Praxagoras of Athens Reviewed in the Light of Attic Epigraphy”, *Historia* 56 (2007): 369–375. Honoratiane’s cousin claimed to be a twenty-first generation descendant of Pericles, see *SEG* LIV 307; Kevin Clinton, *The Sacred Officials of the Eleusinian Mysteries* (American Philosophical Society, 1974), 54. Other individuals claimed descent from Pericles (*IG* II² 3546), Conon and Callimachus (*IG* II² 3688), and Themistocles (Paus. 1.37.1; Plu. *Them.* 1.32.6). Earlier examples are the sixteen generations claimed by Hecataeus (Hdt. 2.143) and the fourteen by Heropythus of Chios (*SGDI* 5656), both in the early 5th century. For further examples of long genealogies, see Angelos Chaniotis, *Historie und Historiker in den griechischen Inschriften. Epigraphische Beiträge zur griechischen Historiographie* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1988), 220–226 with n. 503. Similar elaborate genealogies existed in Roman Sparta for those who claimed descent from Heracles and the Dioscuri, extending to at least the forty-eight and forty-seventh generations respectively, as well as Poseidon, Rhadamanthys, Lysander, and Brasidas, and even local Argive heroes such as Inachus, Perseus, and Phoroneus, see Arthur M. Woodward, “Excavations at Sparta, 1924–28, 1: The Theatre: Architectural Remains”, *Annual of the British School at Athens* 30 (1928–1929, 1929–1930): 222–225; Anthony Spawforth, “Families at Roman Sparta and Epidaurus: Some Prosopographical Notes”, *Annual of the British School at Athens* 80 (1985).

51 Smith, “Lost Historian”, 372 also points out that the Macedonian writer Polyaeus refers to Philip and Alexander as his *progonoi* (praef. 4), perhaps suggesting a similar claim to Argead descent, though this is more likely a reference to his Macedonian heritage.

52 *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans Also Ricci (London: Routledge, 1931), 56.

53 Phiroze Vasunia, *The Classics and Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 77–89.

contexts and to promote a specific image or gain from association with specific actions of Alexander's.⁵⁴ One had to be careful not to become associated with the negative aspects of Alexander's character. Pompey was mocked by some for his imitation of Alexander (Plu. *Pomp.* 2.2; *Crass.* 7.1), while Cicero, Seneca, and Lucan all cited Alexander as a model of cruelty and savagery.⁵⁵ Plutarch refers to Alexander, like Cyrus and Caesar, as someone with an insatiable love of power (*Ant.* 6.3). Alexander was a Macedonian monarch and, as Kienast has shown, emulation of him could be contentious since it clashed with many of the traditional values of the Roman Republic.⁵⁶ The situation became less complicated under the Roman Empire, when Rome was essentially a monarchy, but in general terms the dynamics and dangers of Alexander-*imitatio* differed in the Greco-Macedonian and the Roman worlds.⁵⁷

Cities, likewise, had different images of Alexander which could, in the case of Hellenistic Athens at least, change depending on the political context.⁵⁸ In Cilician Soli Alexander's actions were a byword for excessive royal power (Welles *RC* 30 = Austin *HW* 279), but in Erythrae and Amisus they were the basis for the cities' claims to freedom, autonomy, and democracy. Each city had a local tradition of Alexander—a dedication, benefaction, or letter—that it could use to pressure a state or king to act according to Alexander's local precedent. Alexander-*imitatio*, therefore, played an important role in the relationship between ruler and city as well as in the construction of the ruler's local and national image. I focus on three examples: Ephesus, Ilium, and Rome.

When Alexander arrived at Ephesus in summer 334 he found the city racked by civil war as the pro-Persian tyrant Syrophax, his son Pelagon, and his brothers were dragged from the Temple of Artemis and killed (*Arr. An.* 1.17.10–12). As punishment, Alexander ordered the city to pay to the Temple of Artemis the tax

54 Kathryn Welch and Hannah Mitchell, "Revisiting the Roman Alexander", *Antichthon* 47 (2013).

55 Cic. *Rep.* 3.24; *Off.* 1.90; *Tusc.* 3.21; *De Inv. rhet.* 1.93; cf. *Att.* 13.28.3; Sen. *Clem.* 1.25; Luc. 10.20–28; Martin, "Pompey", 26.

56 Dietmar Kienast, "Augustus und Alexander", *Gymnasium* 76 (1969).

57 Green, "Caesar and Alexander"; Erich Gruen, "Rome and the Myth of Alexander", in *Ancient History in a Modern University*, ed. Tom Hillard et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

58 Hans-Ulrich Wiemer, "Hero, God or Tyrant? Alexander the Great in the Early Hellenistic Period", in *Antimonarchical Discourses in Antiquity*, ed. Börm Henning (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2015), 90–95; Wallace "Alexander and democracy", 52–63.

(*phoros*) that it had paid to the Persians and he extended the temple's sacred boundary.⁵⁹ Strabo records how Alexander's actions were later emulated by others (Str. 14.1.23 [C641]):⁶⁰

The temple remains a place of refuge, the same as in earlier times, although the limits of the refuge have often been changed; for example, when Alexander extended them to a stade, and when Mithridates shot an arrow from the corner of the roof and thought it went a little farther than a stade, and when Antony doubled this distance and included within the refuge a part of the city. But this proved harmful and turned the city over to criminals, so it was nullified by Augustus Caesar.

ἄσυλον δὲ μένει τὸ ἱερόν καὶ νῦν καὶ πρότερον· τῆς δ' ἄσυλίας τοὺς ὅρους ἀλλὰ γῆναι συνέβη πολλάκις, Ἀλεξάνδρου μὲν ἐπὶ στάδιον ἐκτείναντος, Μιθριδάτου δὲ τόξευμα ἀφέντος ἀπὸ τῆς γωνίας τοῦ κεράμου καὶ δόξαντος ὑπερβαλέσθαι μικρὰ τὸ στάδιον, Ἀντωνίου δὲ διπλασιάσαντος τοῦτο καὶ συμπεριλαβόντος τῇ ἄσυλίᾳ μέρος τι τῆς πόλεως· ἐφάνη δὲ τοῦτο βλαβερόν καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς κακούργοις ποιοῦν τὴν πόλιν, ὥστ' ἠχύρωσεν ὁ Σεβαστὸς Καῖσαρ.

Trans: H. L. JONES, Loeb Classical Library (adapted)

By extending the sacred boundary “a little farther than a stade”, the limit of Alexander's original extension, and then “doubling this distance”, Mithridates and Marc Antony engaged in Alexander-*imitatio*, whereby each extension signified a reference to and an improvement on Alexander's original action.⁶¹ By emu-

59 Arr. An. 1.17.10, 18.1–2; Panikos Stylianou, “The Pax Macedonica and the Freedom of the Greeks of Asia (with an Appendix on the Chronology of the Years 323–301)”, *Επετηρίς—Annual of the Cyprus Reserch Centre* 20 (1994): 28–29. Alexander had close connections with the temple of Artemis, which had burned down on the night of his birth (Plu. *Alex.* 3.5–9). He dedicated to Artemis a spear and a shield (*A.P.* 6.97, 128) while Apelles' painting of Alexander wielding a thunderbolt hung in the temple (Pliny *HN* 35.92; cf. Ael. *vh* 2.3; Cic. *Verr.* 6.60; Plu. *Alex.* 4.3–4), which Alexander later offered to dedicate and finance (Str. 14.1.22 [C641]; Stylianou, “Pax Macedonica”, 29).

60 Stylianou, “Pax Macedonica”, 27–29; Rigsby, *Asylia*, 385–393. Alexander respected the sacred boundary. Later in his reign he wrote to the priest of Artemis at Ephesus, Megabyzus, asking him to recapture a runaway slave, but not to violate the temple's sanctity (Plu. *Alex.* 42.1). *IK.Priene* 16 (c. 296/5) honours Megabyzus for his role in rebuilding the temple.

61 An Ephesian decree in honour of Euphronius of Acarnania (c. 302) records his successful embassy to Lysimachus' general Prepelaus ὑπὲρ τοῦ σταθμοῦ τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ τῆς ἀτελείας τῇ θεῷ, which might also relate to Alexander's decision (*IK.Ephesos* 1449). For Marc Antony's arrival at Ephesus in 41 BC, see Plu. *Ant.* 24.

lating a specific local gesture, each ruler presented himself as Alexander's successor, by extending the boundary beyond Alexander's original stadium, each claimed to have surpassed Alexander. After his victory at Actium, Augustus nullified all earlier extensions. Mithridates and Antony expressed their power by increasing Alexander's extensions, though both violated the sacred boundary when it suited them.⁶² Augustus expressed his power by restoring the boundary under Alexander.⁶³

In whose interests, however, were these extensions made? Mithridates and Antony must have learned of Alexander's actions from the priests themselves, who had much to gain from prominent royal interest in the shrine, even if it did, as Strabo says, cause the city to fill up with criminals.⁶⁴ Civic interests appear to have taken a backseat to royal emulation. Ephesus was, however, able to use these acts in its own interests during its negotiations with the Senate regarding its *asylia* in AD 22. According to Tacitus (*Ann.* 3.61), Ephesus claimed that "the temple's sacrosanctity had been enhanced by permission of Hercules when he was in control of Lydia ... and its privileges had not been diminished under the Persian Empire, after which the Macedonians, and then we, kept them in force". Alexander-*imitatio* at Ephesus saw Hellenistic and Roman rulers act according to a local tradition, which gave the city a powerful precedent to be used in later negotiations. Such *imitatio* also functioned within a deep history of mythical and historical precedents, stretching back to the birth of the gods Apollo and Artemis.

Ilium was perhaps the most famous site of both Alexander-*imitatio* and Alexander-*comparatio* in the historic and historiographic traditions since his visit to the site in 334 "defined Ilium for the Hellenistic age".⁶⁵ Alexander

62 Mithridates ordered the execution of Romans who had taken refuge in the temple in 88 BC (App. *Mith.* 4.23 [88]) as Antony did the suppliant Arsinoe IV in 41 BC (J. *AJ* 15.89; *Ap.* 2.57; App. *BC* 5.1.9; D. *C.* 48.24.2).

63 *IK.Ephesos* 1520 records the temple's sacred boundary under Augustus, on which see further Rigsby, *Asylia*, 388–393.

64 Guy Rogers, *The Sacred Identity of Ephesos: Foundation Myths of a Roman City* (London: Routledge, 1991), 7–8.

65 For recent studies of Ilium's relations with the great powers of antiquity, see Andrew Erskine, *Troy Between Greece and Rome. Local Tradition and Imperial Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), esp. 225–253 (228: quote); Charles Rose, *The Archaeology of Greek and Roman Troy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 158–276; William Pil-lot, "Ilium, Athena Ilias et es Detroits, d'Alexandre le Grand a Antiochos III", in *Identité régionale, identités civiques autour des Détroits des Dardanelles et du Bosphore (V^e siècle av. J.-C.–I^{er} siècle apr. J.-C.)*, ed. Jacques Annequin et al. (Besancon-Cedex: Universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2016).

sacrificed to Athena, Achilles, and Priam (Arr. *An.* 1.11.8–12.1; Plu. *Alex.* 15.7–8) and exchanged his armour for that surviving from the Trojan War (Arr. *An.* 1.11.7–8, 6.9.1, 10.2; D.S. 17.8.1). According to Strabo, he made numerous dedications at the Temple of Athena, gave Ilium the title of city, initiated a new building programme, declared it free and untaxed, and promised to build a large temple and found sacred games (13.1.26 [C593]).⁶⁶ The scale of benefactions is exaggerated and simply reflects Alexander's importance as a symbolic new founder for the city. Imitation of Alexander's actions began soon after his death. Strabo records that Lysimachus built a temple with an enclosing wall forty stadia long, but this appears to be in error—Grote suggested that there is a lacuna in the text here⁶⁷—as the archaeological evidence shows that the new precinct and Temple of Athena, the new Bouleuterion, and the new city wall were all started c. 250–230 BC.⁶⁸ Antiochus III may have emulated Alexander when he sacrificed to Athena at Ilium before invading Europe in 192 BC (Livy 35.43.3), though parallel with either Xerxes' (Hdt. 7.43) or the Spartan general Mindarus' (X. *HG* 1.1.4) sacrifices to Athena in 480 and 411 respectively is inescapable. Gaius Livius Salinator and Lucius Cornelius Scipio also sacrificed to Athena at Ilium in 190 BC (Livy 37.9.7, 37.3) and during the civil wars Sulla granted the city its freedom, perhaps in emulation of Alexander.⁶⁹

Caesar too granted Ilium freedom and tax-exemption because of his kinship with the Trojans and his wish to emulate Alexander (Str. 13.1.27 [C595]: φιλαλέξανδρος ὤν).⁷⁰ It is possible that Caesar's actions were motivated both by his wish to emulate Alexander and by some reference by Ilium to Alexander's, Sulla's, and others' benefactions in an embassy to Caesar, as Amisus had done in its negotiations with Lucullus in 71 BC. Strabo does not refer to local pressure from Ilium, but it is possible. Caesar's benefactions to Ilium allowed later authors to weave a rich historiographic tapestry of Alexander-comparatio based around the city as a *lieu de mémoire*. In Lucan's *Pharsalia* (9.511–586) Cato

66 Pillot, "Ilion, Athéna, et les Détroits", 135–145. Alexander was also, apparently, offered Paris' lyre, but he spurned it as weak and inferior to Achilles' (Plu. *Alex.* 15.8; *Moralia* 331d–e).

67 Gorge Grote, *A History of Greece*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1872), 300 n. 2. The issue is still debated, Pillot, "Ilion, Athéna, et les Détroits", 150–152.

68 Rose, *Archaeology*, 175–185. For Lysimachus and Alexander, see Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 318–321; Helen S. Lund, *Lysimachus. A Study in Early Hellenistic Kingship* (London: Routledge, 1992), 164, 167.

69 App. *Mith.* 9.61 [250]; D.C. 35.104.7; Str. 13.2.27 [C594–595].

70 An earlier member of the family, Lucius Iulius Caesar, had confirmed the sacred land of Athena as tax-exempt (IK.Ilion 71), a status Claudius would later reconfirm (Suet. *Claud.* 25.3).

visits the oracle of Ammon at Siwah but refuses to engage in Alexander-*imitatio* by questioning it. Caesar, on the other hand, visits Ilium and is depicted as engaging in Alexander-*imitatio* by sacrificing to Athena and praying for his own success (9.966–999). Lucan then compares Caesar's ambitions at Ilium with Alexander's when he has Caesar rush to visit Alexander's tomb in Alexandria. Describing Alexander as the "mad son of Macedonian Philip", he makes him a model of savagery, destruction, and excessive ambition (10.14–52), a characterization also attributable to Caesar.⁷¹

Alexander-*imitatio* and *comparatio* at Ilium from at least the time of Caesar onwards became tied to Rome's Trojan origins, but by transporting artefacts and monuments connected with Alexander back to Rome, the Romans created a new image of Alexander that was simultaneously within and out-with its Hellenistic context. What began as a private phenomenon in the late Republic developed into a key part of the imperial image.⁷² Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus moved to Rome from Dium Lysippus' sculptural group of the twenty-five Macedonian horsemen who had fallen at Granicus.⁷³ They were housed in the *porticus Metelli*, which also housed statues of Artemis and Asclepius by Cephisodotus and the Eros by Praxiteles from Thespieae. Metellus may have been presenting himself as a successor to, or superior of, Alexander. Pompey, as we have seen, wore what he claimed was Alexander's cloak in his triumph of 61 BC (App. *Mith.* 17.117 [577]), which Caligula later emulated in AD 39 (D.C. 59.17.3; Suet. *Calig.* 52). Augustus rededicated in the Temple of Apollo Palatinus the tree-shaped ceiling lamp that Alexander had dedicated at Cyme. Nero possessed a famous bronze statue of Alexander by Lysippus which he had gilded, thus ruining its artistic value (Plin. *HN* 34.63). In the second century AD, Caracalla used weapons and cups that he believed had belonged to Alexander (D.C. 78.7–8).

71 Weippert, *Alexander-imitatio*, 116–118; Otto Zwierlein, "Lucans Caesar in Troja", *Hermes* 114 (1986); Erskine, *Troy*, 245–250; Kühnen, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 82.

72 On the presence of Alexander artefacts in Rome, see Giovannella Marrone, "Alessandro fra ideologia e propaganda in età augustea", *Giornale Italiano di Filologia* 9 (1978); "Imitatio Alexandri in età augustea (nota a Plin., nat. 35, 27 e 93–94)", *Atene e Roma* 25 (1980); *Ecumene Augustea: Una politica per il consenso* (Rome: L'Erme di Bretschneider, 1993), esp. 12–30; Birte Poulsen, "Alexander the Great in Italy during the Hellenistic Period", in *Alexander the Great: Reality and Myth*, ed. Jesper Carlsen et al. (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1993).

73 Arr. *An.* 1.16.4; Vell. Pat. 1.11.3–5; Plin. *HN* 34.64; Giuliana Calcani, *Cavalieri di bronzo: la torma di Alessandro opera di Lisippo* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1989).

Interest in Alexander increased in Rome during the civil wars in the late first century BC as monuments and works of art associated with Alexander were transported *en masse* to Rome and rededicated.⁷⁴ In many cases it appears that this was done by the emperor himself, which suggests increasing imperial control over Alexander's image and its association with the emperor. Statius (*Silv.* 1.1.84–88) records that a statue of Alexander by Lysippus was placed in the Forum Iulium, opposite the temple of Venus Genetrix, but that the head had been replaced with Julius Caesar's.⁷⁵ Pliny (*HN* 35.93–94) describes paintings of a victorious Alexander by Apelles that were rededicated by Augustus in the Forum Augustum but later altered by Claudius.⁷⁶ He also records a large painting of Alexander by the Athenian Nicias, which was dedicated in the Porticus Pompeii (Plin. *HN* 35.132), as well as a series of full-size and miniature paintings by Antiphilus, both late fourth century BC artists, that were rededicated in the Porticus Octaviae and the Porticus Philippi (*HN* 35.114). It is not certain who dedicated these paintings, but Augustus is a good contender. Parts of what may have been Alexander's tent found their way back to Rome, again probably on Augustus' initiative. Pliny's describes "four statues as tent-poles" (Plin. *HN* 34.48)—two placed outside the temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum Augustum, two placed in front of the Regium near the Temple of Vesta—but these may have come, as Paul Rehak suggests, not from Alexander's tent but from his funeral carriage, which according to Diodorus (18.26.6) integrated statues of winged victories.⁷⁷ Augustus emulated and was associated with Alexander.

74 For the following monuments, see Michel, *Alexander als Vorbild*, 15–18; Marrone, *Ecumene Augustea*, 38–49; Kühnen, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 120–123.

75 Michel, *Alexander*, 102–104; Weippert, *Alexander-imitatio*, 113–115; Richard Westall, "The Forum Iulium as Representation of Emperor Caesar", *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung* 103 (1996): 88, 93. Green, "Caesar and Alexander", 13 and Welch and Mitchell, "Roman Alexander", 94 argue that Caesar himself ordered the head replaced.

76 Bernhard Schmaltz, "Ein triumphierender Alexander?", *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung* 101 (1994), questioning the attribution of the *Alexandro in curru triumphante* to Apelles; Martin Spannagel, *Exemplaria principis. Untersuchungen zu Entstehung und Ausstattung des Augustusforums* (Heidelberg, 1999), 28–30 with ns. 97–98, 315–316. Apelles' famous painting from the temple of Artemis in Ephesus depicting Alexander with a thunderbolt was not, apparently, removed (Cicero *Verr.* 2.4.135; Plin. *HN* 35.92; Ael. *VH* 2.3).

77 Paul Rehak, "The Statues of Alexander the Great in the Forum Augustum and the Regia", *American Journal of Archaeology* 94 (1990); Spannagel, *Exemplaria Principis*, 203–204 with n. 772, 286.

Prophecies regarding his birth paralleled him with Alexander and Seleucus,⁷⁸ he wore his hair like Alexander and his seal at one time bore an image of the king (Suet. *Aug.* 50; Plin. *HN* 37.10), Tiberius compared him with Alexander and Romulus (D.C. 56.36), and he visited Alexander's tomb in Alexandria and crowned the dead king.⁷⁹ By associating himself with Alexander Augustus claimed to be his legitimate successor, but by altering Alexander's decisions, such as removing his dedication from Cyme, he presented himself as Alexander's superior.

Catherine Edwards has recently examined how Roman conquest was symbolized by the movement to Rome of the art of the defeated nation.⁸⁰ In addition to three statues of Hannibal (Plin. *HN* 34.32) and one of Jugurtha (Plu. *Sull.* 6), the spoils of Augustus' victory over Cleopatra were also dedicated throughout Rome, at the Temple of Minerva, the Curia Julia, the shrine of Julius, and to Jupiter Capitolinus, Juno, and Minerva. Apparently, all earlier dedications were removed to make room. "Thus," says Dio, "Cleopatra, though defeated and captured, was nevertheless glorified, inasmuch as her adornments repose as dedications in our temples and she herself is seen in gold in the shrine of Venus" (D.C. 51.22.1–3). Dio is clear that by bringing so much of the spoils of his victories to Rome Augustus honoured the defeated Cleopatra. The transportation of so many images of Alexander to Rome served a similar purpose. It showed that Augustus has surpassed and, in a manner of speaking, defeated Alexander. Alexander himself became the spoils of war in Rome's conquest of his successors.

Worshipping Alexander

Much has been written regarding Alexander's divinity, mostly on whether he was worshipped in his lifetime and whether he ordered his own deification.

78 Alexander: Cic. *Phil.* 5.47; Suet. *Aug.* 94.5; Sid. *Apoll. Carm.* 2.121–126; David Wardle, *Suetonius: Life of Augustus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2014), 514. Seleucus: Suet. *Aug.* 94.4; David Engels, "Prodigies and Religious Propaganda: Seleucus and Augustus", in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* xv, ed. Carl Deroux (Brussels: Latomus, 2010).

79 Suet. *Aug.* 18.1; D.C. 51.16.5; Wardle, *Life of Augustus*, 157–158. On Augustus and Alexander, see the useful overviews in Weippert, *Alexander-imitatio*, 214–223; Kühnen, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 107–139; Lara O'Sullivan, "Augustus and Alexander the Great at Athens", *Phoenix* 70 (2016).

80 Catherine Edwards, "Importing the Alien: The Art of Conquest", in *Rome the Cosmopolis*, ed. Catherine Edwards and Greg Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

There is no reason to revisit these arguments, excellent overviews have recently been provided by Franca Ferrandini and Boris Dreyer and there is as yet no concrete evidence for Alexander's deification during his lifetime, though it is likely.⁸¹ In this final section I examine the afterlife of a few of these cults and explore how they were used by cities and rulers to create links with Alexander and to facilitate diplomatic negotiations. The cults changed over time, some went through periods of decline and revival while others were augmented by the addition of festivals or cults in honour of other individuals or gods. Alexander's cultic afterlife was dynamic and vibrant.

Evidence for cults for Alexander the Great exists from Alexandria, Athens, Bargylia, Beroia, Ephesus, Erythrae, Iasus, Ilium, the Ionian League, Cos, Macedonia, Magnesia-on-the-Maeander, Miletus, Mytilene, Pella, Priene, Rhodes, Teos, Thasus, and perhaps even Sparta.⁸² By as early as the late fourth century BC cults to Alexander began to be associated with other cults and festivals. A law from Thasus from c. 325–300 recording the days of public festivals names twenty, including side-by-side the *Duodekatheia* and the *Alexandreia*.⁸³ It is tempting to see both festivals as associated, particularly since Alexander's cult was elsewhere associated with the *Dodekatheoi*.⁸⁴ In Rhodes, a series of decrees from the late second and first centuries BC show that sometime prior to 129 BC the festivals of the *Alexandreia* and the *Dionysia* were amalgamated,

81 Franca Ferrandini Troisi, "La divinizzazione di Alessandro Magno: testimonianze epigrafiche", *Epigraphica* 67 (2005); Boris Dreyer, "Heroes, Cults, and Divinity", in *Alexander the Great: A New History*, ed. Waldemar Heckel and Laurence A. Tritle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

82 Dreyer, "Heroes, cults, and divinity"; Andrew Erskine, "Ruler Cult and the Early Hellenistic City", in *The Age of the Successors and the Creation of the Hellenistic Kingdoms (323–276 BC)*, ed. Hans Hauben and Alexander Meeus (Leuven: Peeters, 2014); cf. Habicht, *Gottmenschentum*, 17–28, 245–246, 251–252.

83 *SEG* XVII 415; *LSCG* Suppl. 69; François Salviat, "Une nouvelle loi thasienne: institutions judiciaires et fêtes religieuses à la fin du IV^e siècle av. J.-C.", *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 82 (1958): 244–248.

84 Philip was depicted as a thirteenth Olympian at his daughter's wedding at Aegae in 336 (D.S. 16.92.5), Demades proposed in 324 BC that Alexander be included as a thirteenth god (Ael. *VH* 5.12), and Lucian claimed that Alexander was added to the *Dodekatheoi* by a number of Greek cities (*DMort* 391). On the phenomenon of the thirteenth deity in Greco-Roman religion, see Otto Weinreich, "Zwölfgötter", in *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, ed. Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher (Hildesheim: Teubner, 1937), col. 801–848; with additions in Antonio La Penna "Il tredicesimo altare", *Athenaeum* 105 (2017).

for which tragic contests, a four-horse chariot race, and a priesthood of Alexander are attested.⁸⁵ The context for the association of these festivals is, however, unknown.

By the mid-third century BC cult honours for Alexander were closely associated with those for his Successors. Andrew Stewart has argued that an early third century statue of Pan-Alexander or Alexander-Panicus from Pella is evidence not only of cult for Alexander but of the association of that cult with the prominent use of Pan in the royal iconography of Antigonos Gonatas.⁸⁶ This is not the only instance of Alexander being associated with Pan, both were painted together by Protogenes at the end of his life, sometime after 306/5 BC (Plin. *HN* 35.106). A fragmentary decree from Cos dating from c. 250 mentions two buildings, an *Alexandreion* and a *Ptolemaieion*.⁸⁷ It is not certain what purpose these buildings served. They may have been cult buildings, such as existed in numerous other cities for other rulers, but we cannot be certain whether they were separate buildings or one building with two names. The *Ptolemaieion*, for instance, might have been the gymnasium, which in 150 BC arranged a procession in honour of Ptolemy IV (*I.Cos* ED 45). At Bargylia the gymnasium was the centre of the cult of Alexander, so it might be the case that at Cos the gymnasium, or different sections of it, were known as both the *Ptolemaieion*, in whose honour it was dedicated, and the *Alexandreion*, since it housed the cult of Alexander. Philip Gauthier has restored the text to show that the gymnasium housed the joint cult of Alexander and Ptolemy, but whatever the case it seems that cult honours for Alexander and Ptolemy were in some way associated on Cos.⁸⁸

The earliest Greek oracles to recognize Alexander's divinity, before even Zeus-Ammon at Siwah, were the Sibyl of Erythrae and the oracle of Apollo among the Branchidae.⁸⁹ A cult of Alexander is confirmed for Erythrae by a decree from c. 300–260 BC recording the sale of priestships and mentioning a

85 *IG* XII (1) 57, 71; *I.Lindos* 233, ll. 8–9; *IGRRP* 1116, ll. 6–7; Mario Segrè, “Il culto rodio di Alessandro e dei Tolomei”, *Bulletin de la Société Royale d'Archéologie d'Alexandrie* 34 (1941); Habicht, *Gottmenschentum*, 26–28. For the date of amalgamation, see Habicht, *Gottmenschentum*, 26 n. 7.

86 Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 286–288 with fig. 99. Note *SEG* XLVII 893, a third century BC epigram to Pan mentioning Antigonos Gonatas.

87 Dmitrios Bosnakis and Klaus Hallof, “Alte und neue Inschriften aus Kos I”, *Chiron* 33 (2003): 226–228, num. 13.

88 *BÉ* (2004) num. 237: [τῶι γυμνασίῳ τῶι Ἀλεξάνδρῳ καὶ Πτολεμαίῳ παρ[ὰ τὰς εἰκόνας (τοὺς βωμοὺς?) τοῦ τε Ἀλεξάνδρου | καὶ τοῦ (Σωτήρος?) Πτολε]μαίου.

89 Str. 17.1.43 (C814); Callisth. *FGrH* 124 F14.

priest of “King Alexander” (*IK.Erythrai* 201, ll. a78–79).⁹⁰ In the 260s Erythrae appears to have integrated the cult of the Seleukids with that of Alexander. In negotiations with Antiochus I in the 260s Erythrae cited Alexander’s grant of *autonomia* and *aphorologesia* (tax-exemption) to the city as a precedent for Antiochus’ reconfirmation of these status benefactions.⁹¹ An Erythraean honorary decree for Antiochos I from c. 270–260 was to be announced at the *Alexandreia* games.⁹² A decree of the Ionian League (*IK.Erythrai* 504), of which Erythrae was a member, from c. 268–262 institutes a festival in honour of Antiochus I, Antiochus II, and Stratonice and makes mention of the *Alexandreia* festival, which we know from Strabo took place at the “sacred precinct of Alexander son of Philip” at Chalcideis, between Teos and Clazomenae (Str. 14.1.31 [c644]). This decree of the Ionian League is fragmentary, but it appears that the initiation of the *Antiocheia* festival was connected with the *Alexandreia* festival.⁹³ Politics and religion were intertwined and the memory of Alexander’s benefactions and the cult in his honour were used by the city in its diplomatic relations with the Seleucid dynasty.

A recently-published altar base from Iasus dating from c. 250–200 BC is more difficult to interpret. Dedicated to “Alexander and Olympias”, the altar was reused and contains illegible traces of an earlier inscription.⁹⁴ Alexander and Olympias are already associated in iconography, but this is their first cult asso-

90 *Syll.*³ 1014.111; *LSAM* 25; see also *IK.Erythrai* 207, l. 90: Ἀλεξάνδρ[ωι]. A priest of Alexander existed as late as the third century AD (*IK.Erythrai* 64: T. Φλ. Αὐρή. Ἀλέξανδρον ... ἱερέα θεοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου). Alexander’s plan to cut through the isthmus of Mount Mimas was not completed (Paus. 2.1.5; Plin. *NH* 5.116), but he did make Erythrae αὐτό[[ν]ομος ἦν καὶ ἀφορολόγητος (*IK.Erythrai* 31, ll. 22–23).

91 *IK.Erythrai* 31, ll. 22–23 (post-261): ἐπὶ τε Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ Ἀντιγόνου αὐτό[[ν]ομος ἦν καὶ ἀφορολόγητος ἢ πόλις ὑμῶν.

92 *IK.Erythrai* 30, ll. 22–23: [ἀναγορεῦσαι δὲ τοὺς ἀγωνοθέτας ἐν τῷ ἀγῶνι] | τῶν Ἀλεξαν[δρεῖων].

93 *IK.Erythrai* 504, ll. 4–5: ὅσον καὶ εἰς τὴν Ἀλε[[ξάνδρου πομπὴν καὶ θυσ[ίαν δίδοται (?); ll. 25–27 (*OGIS* 222): [—τὴν θυ[σίαν τῶν Ἀλεξανδρεῖων] | [παρακαλεῖν πάντας τοὺς δῆμ[ους] τοὺς μετέχοντας τῆς | [θύσιας]. The runner Praxippos won the παιδᾶς δόλιχον | Ἀλεξάνδρεια in the late third or early second century BC (*IK.Erythrai* 87, ll. 5–6); the boxer Lenaïos won ἀνδρας δὲ Ἰσθμια [καὶ τὸν ἀχθέντα] | ὑπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ τῶν Ἰώνων [Ἀλεξάνδρῳι] | ἀγῶνα καὶ Ἡράκλῃα sometime after 31 BC (*IK.Erythrai* 89, ll. 5–7).

94 *SEG* LX 1110: Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ Ὀλυμπιάδος; Gianfranco Maddoli, “Epigrafi di Iasos: Nuovi supplementi, I”, *La parola del passato* 62 (2007): 310–316; “Du nouveau sur les Hékatomnides d’après les inscriptions de Iasos”, in *Hellenistic Karia*, ed. Riet van Bremen and Jan-Mathieu Carbon (Talence: Ausonius Éditions, 2010), 129–131; “Ara in onore di Alessandro ed Olimpiade”, *Studi Classici e Orientali* 61 (2015): 137–143.

ciation.⁹⁵ It is tempting to assume that the altar refers to Alexander III and his mother Olympias, but a context for a joint cult is not easy to find. The publisher Gianfranco Maddoli has suggested the restoration of Macedonian control in Caria under Antigonos Doson and Philip V in the 220s—Doson's mother was a Thessalian named Olympias—or Augustan propaganda, a view supported by Anna Maria Biraschi.⁹⁶ The altar may even refer to Alexander II and Olympias II of Epirus, husband and wife and half-sibling children of Pyrrhus.

Cults to Alexander had a long afterlife and two examples from the third century AD show how they could be renewed under the Roman Empire. A third century AD statue base from Bargylia in Caria, but which might have come originally from Iasos, records a new statue for “God Alexander”.⁹⁷ It would appear that the cult of Alexander in Bargylia was revived in the third century, perhaps as a result of Severan *imitatio Alexandri* and the increased popularity of Alexander at this time.⁹⁸ Caracalla's emulation of Alexander was legendary and saw him undertake a campaign against the Parthians in AD 216/7 complete with a Macedonian-style phalanx.⁹⁹ Severus Alexander was allegedly born in a temple of Alexander, assumed his name, and added his image to the deified emperors in his personal chapel.¹⁰⁰ A marble plaque from the Roman agora of Beroia in Macedon and dating to AD 252 mentions an *Alexandreia* festival. A further inscription connects the *Alexandreia* with the *Olympia* in Beroia, which Leschhorn has recently argued first took place in AD 243, under Gordian III.¹⁰¹ A series of late second or third century AD inscriptions from Mygdonia, near

95 Margarete Bieber, “The Portraits of Alexander the Great”, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 93 (1949): 378–379.

96 Anna Maria Biraschi, “Alessandro ed Olimpiade a Iasos. Tradizioni greco-troiane fra Epiro ed Asia Minore da Alessandro ad Augusto”, *Studi Classici e Orientali* 61 (2015): 145–161.

97 *IK.Iasos* 620 = *OGIS* 3: Θεὸν | Ἀλέξανδρον | ἡ πόλις | ἀνενέωσάτο.

98 Andrew Stewart, “Alexander in Greek and Roman Art”, in *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great*, ed. Joseph Roisman (Brill: Leiden, 2003), 61–66; Dahmen, *Legend of Alexander*, 123–151.

99 Hdn. 4.8; D.C. 78.7–9; Kühnen, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 176–186. Nero had earlier renamed a legion “the phalanx of Alexander the Great”, see Suet. *Nero* 19.2; David Woods, “Three Notes on Military Affairs under Nero”, *Revue des Études Militaires Anciennes* 3 (2006): 148–150. Antiochus IV Epiphanes of Commagene had a unit of ‘Macedonians’ who were trained, dressed, and equipped in Macedonian style (Joseph. *BJ* 5.460–465).

100 SHA *Alex. Sev.* 5.1–2, 13.1–4, 25.9, 30.3, 31.4–5, 35.1–4, 50.4–5; Dahmen, *Legend of Alexander*, 135 with pl. 20.

101 SEG XLIX 815, l. 6 (see also *I.Beroia* 68, ll. 10–11, 69, ll. 6–7); *I.Perinthos-Herakleia* 31, ll. 6–7; Wolfgang Leschhorn, “Griechische Agone in Makedonien und Thrakien. Ihre Verbreitung und politisch-religiöse Bedeutung in der römischen Kaiserzeit”, in *Stephanos nomis-*

Thessaloniki, record dedications to Alexander the Great, his son Alexander IV, and his sister Thessalonice (*SEG* XLVII 960; *IG* X.2 (1), 275–277); one mentions a priest of Alexander, the son of Zeus (*IG* X.2 (1) 278, ll. 1–3: ἱερεὺς Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Ἀπὸ Διός). We cannot associate any of these cults with the Severans directly, but Caracalla's and his successors' fixation with Alexander the Great must have stimulated many Greek cities to renew or reemphasise their cults to Alexander in the early third century AD, as the Tarsus and Aboukir medallions suggest.¹⁰² The cults to Alexander at Bargylia, Beroia, and indeed at Erythrae, where a priest of Alexander is attested in the third century AD,¹⁰³ reveal the continued prominence of Alexander. As with the evidence from Pella, Cos, and Erythrae, where cults of Alexander facilitated diplomatic connections with the Antigonid, Ptolemaic, and Seleucid dynasties, so too might the cults of Alexander at Bargylia and Beroia have facilitated such contacts with the Roman emperors and reflected royal propaganda under the Severans.

Conclusion

Alexander *imitatio*, *aemulatio*, and *comparatio* were adaptive and could have very local characteristics. Each city had its own Alexander, which influenced a ruler's engagement with Alexander's memory at a local level. At Ephesus, Mithridates, Antony, and Augustus all imitated Alexander's earlier extension of the temple's sacred boundary. At Amisus, Lucullus played Alexander's local role as guarantor of freedom and democracy, as Sulla, Caesar, and others did at Ilium. At Rome Alexander became the spoils of war, and his dedications, paintings, and monuments assumed new meanings in that context. These local Alexanders were, at times, highly original. Echoes of a uniquely Arcadian Alexander could be found at Megalopolis: a descendant of Alexander was invented in the second century BC, just as a “house of Alexander” had been invented by the second century AD—might the “house of Alexander” that Pausanias saw originally have belonged to Alexander of Megalopolis?—and dedications by Alexander were presented to tourists at nearby Gortys. Coupled with the statues in the agora and renamed Stoa of Philip, there is a deeply inventive local history here of Argead connection with the city.

matikos. Edith Schöner-Geiss zum 65. Geburtstag, ed. Ulrike Peter (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1998), 402. The Ὀλύμπια ἐν Βεροίᾳ is also mentioned in *IG* II² 3169/70, l. 19.

102 On which, see Dahmen, *Legend of Alexander*, 144–152 with pls. 25.3–27.7.

103 *IK.Erythrai* 64; T. Φλ. Αὐρή. Ἀλέξανδρον ... ἱερέα θεοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου.

Since imitation or emulation of Alexander was in many cases locally-grounded, it frequently operated within the repertoire of techniques that a ruler had for engaging with a subject city or community. Engagement with the memory of Alexander's actions was part of the negotiation of statuses and the balance of power between ruler and city, and Alexander's precedent lasted well into the Roman period. Cities promoted local variations of Alexander in order to pressure rulers to act in certain ways, while rulers themselves engaged in Alexander-*imitatio* or *aemulatio* in order to present and legitimise their power over the city. The afterlife of Alexander's cults shows how his memory could be employed in negotiations with Hellenistic kings, as at Erythrae in the 260s BC, or in response to imperial promotions of royal imagery, as with Caracalla in the third century AD.

But as Alexander's afterlife moved from the Hellenistic Greek to the Roman imperial world, the nature of his reception changed and its associations were rethought as new audiences appeared. Roman *imitatio* may have begun in the republican period with the intense elite rivalry and movement towards sole rule seen during the civil wars, but it was expanded and monopolised by the emperors in the imperial period. Alexander's literary popularity never waned and the surviving literary sources for his reign—Diodorus, Curtius Rufus, Plutarch, Arrian, Justin—span the mid-first century BC to the early third century AD. But, by the third century AD there was a perceptible increase in Alexander cults and claims to descent which perhaps reflect Severan emulation of Alexander and increased royal interest in Alexander as model. Imitation was undertaken for various reasons—to justify local precedents, to display status or military victory, to make claims to legitimate rule in the Greek east—but historic *imitatio* allowed historiographic *comparatio*. By imitating Alexander, Roman generals and emperors left themselves open to negative association with the worst aspects of his character. Greco-Macedonian engagement with the memory of Alexander may have been different from Roman, but the memory of his actions remained important within the relationship between ruler and subject throughout Greek and Roman history.

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- Austin *HW* Austin, Michel. *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest. A Selection of Ancient Sources in Translation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- BÉ* *Bulletin Épigraphique*; in *Revue des Études Grecques*
- FGrH* Jacoby, Felix. *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Berlin, 1923–.
- GHI* Rhodes, Peter and Robin Osborne. *Greek Historical Inscriptions, 404–323 BC*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- I.Beroia* Gounaropoulou, Lucretia, and Miltiades B. Hatzopoulos. *Επιγραφές Κάτω Μακεδονίας: μεταξύ του Βερμίου όρους και του Αξιού ποταμού: τεύχος Α' Επιγραφές Βέροιας*. Athens: Diffusion de Boccard, 1998.
- I.Cos* Segrè, Mario. *Iscrizioni di Cos*, 2 vols. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1993.
- I.Eleusis* Clinton, Kevin. *Eleusis: The Inscriptions on Stone*, 2 vols. Athens: Archaeological Society at Athens, 2005–2008.
- I.Lindos* Blinkenberg, Christian. *Lindos. Fouilles et recherches, 1902–1914*. Vol. II, *Inscriptions*. 2 vols. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1941.
- I.Olympia* Dittenberger, Wilhelm and Karl Purgold. *Die Inschriften von Olympia*. Berlin: A. Asher, 1896.
- I.Perinthos-Herakleia* Sayar, Mustafa Hamdi. *Perinthos-Herakleia (Marmara Ereğlisi) und Umgebung. Geschichte, Testimonien, griechische und lateinische Inschriften*. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 1998.
- IG* *Inscriptiones Graecae*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1873–.
- IGLSyr I* Jalabert, Louis, and René Mouterde. *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie, I. Commagène et Cyrrhestique*. Paris: Geuthner, 1929.
- IGRRP* *Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes*, 3 vols. Paris: Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1911–1927.
- IK. Adramytteion* (IK 50–51) Staube, Josef. *Die Bucht von Adramytteion*, 2 vols. Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 1996.

- IK.Ephesos* (IK 11.1–2, 12–16, 17.1–4) Wankel, Hermann, et al. *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, 10 vols. Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 1979–1981.
- IK.Erythrai* (IK 1) Engelmann, Helmut, and Reinhold Merkelbach. *Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai*, 2 vols. Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 1972–1973.
- IK.Iasos* (IK 28.1–2) Blümel, Wolfgang. *Die Inschriften von Iasos*, 2 vols. Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 1985.
- IK.Ilion* (IK 3) Frisch, Peter. *Die Inschriften von Ilion*. Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 1975.
- IK.Priene* (IK 69) Blümel, Wolfgang, and Reinhold Merkelbach. *Die Inschriften von Priene*. Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 2014.
- ISE* Moretti, Luigi. *Iscrizioni storiche ellenistiche*, 2 vols. Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1967–1975.
- LSAM* Sokolowski, Franciszek. *Lois Sacrées de l'Asie Mineure*. Paris: Éditions de Boccard, 1955.
- LSCG* Sokolowski, Franciszek. *Lois sacrées des cités grecques*. Paris: Éditions de Boccard, 1969.
- Mauerbauinschriften* Maier, Franz Georg. *Griechische Mauerbauinschriften*, 2 vols. Heidelberg: Vestigia, 1959–1961.
- OGIS* Dittenberger, Wilhelm. *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, 2 vols. Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1903–1905.
- P.Oxy.* *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. London: The Egypt Exploration Society, 1898–.
- RPC* *Roman Provincial Coinage*. London: The British Museum Press, 1992–.
- SEG* *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. Leiden: Brill, 1923–.
- SGDI* Collitz, Hermann, and Friedrich Brechtel, *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*, 4 vols. Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1884–1915.
- Welles RC* Welles, Charles Bradford. *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period: A Study in Greek Epigraphy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934.

Alexander between Rome and Persia: Politics, Ideology, and History*

Jake Nabel

سکندر شد و ماند ایدر سخن!

Alexander passed on, and words are all that's left of him now.

FERDOWSI¹



By the end of the first century BCE, the lands that Alexander the Great had conquered had fallen under the sway of two vast empires. In the West, Rome dominated the Mediterranean basin and large swathes of northern Europe; in the East, the Arsacid dynasty of Parthia reigned over the Iranian plateau, Mesopotamia, and parts of central Asia. Though the Arsacids would later fall to the Sasanian dynasty and the Romans would lose their empire in the west, the basic division of the ancient world between a Roman Mediterranean and an Iranian Near East proved remarkably long-lived. Not until the Arab conquests of the seventh century CE would this geopolitical status quo shatter and give way to a new world.

As the Parthians and Romans and later the Sasanians and Byzantines sought to make sense of their imperial peers and rivals on the other side of the Euphrates, the memory of Alexander provided historical foundations on which an understanding of the current age could be built. Neither in Iran nor in Rome were these foundations fixed or immutable, and the evaluation of Alexander's

* I thank Éric Rebillard and Josef Wiesehöfer for valuable feedback. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

1 Ferdowsi, *Šāh-nāma* = Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh and M. Omidshar, eds., *Abu'l-Qasem Ferdowsi: The Shahnameh (The Book of Kings)*, vol. 6 (Costa Mesa, CA; New York: Mazda Publishers, 2005), 128, line 1902; cf. Dick Davis, trans., *Abolqasem Ferdowsi: Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings*, (New York: Penguin, 2007), 528.

legacy was always a contested business. But the *anabasis* of the Macedonian conqueror remained a crucial reference point for explaining the present by means of the past, a formative event of great antiquity that helped draw the fault lines between Persian and Roman imperial space. To remember Alexander was not just to ruminate on ancient conquests that were variously interpreted as glorious or transgressive; it was a means of thinking through the relationship between the two imperial giants of the ancient Mediterranean and Near East—along with the range of possibilities between antagonism and coexistence that could shape engagement between them.

The Persian and Roman receptions of Alexander are usually discussed separately, and for good reason. As discussed below, the Alexander traditions in these empires differed in their languages, genres, and means of transmission, making direct comparison a difficult enterprise.² Nevertheless, this contribution tries to jointly consider the Iranian and Roman Alexanders as products of a shifting and contested status quo between the two worlds. Alexander's reception was shaped by myth and history, but it was also influenced by the demands of political ideology in an interstate environment dominated by two great powers. When the Iranians and Romans told stories about Alexander, they were also, in an important sense, telling stories about their relationship to one another. To consider these two receptions together is to trace an aspect of one of the most significant and enduring geopolitical divisions of the ancient world, and the origins of a gulf between East and West that persists to this day.

The Terms of Comparison

The Iranian and Roman Alexanders are the constructions of very different literary traditions. In the Mediterranean, a range of contemporary literary sources

2 Cf. Daniel Selden's comments on Peter Brunt's attempt to reconstruct the Persian point of view: "In 1962, P.A. Brunt ... published a paper entitled 'Persian Accounts of Alexander's Campaigns,' in which he managed to cite *none* of the extant Iranian narratives of the Makedonian invasion ... To give Brunt his due, however, had he consulted the Iranian literature ... he would have encountered reports of Alexander whose discursive organization differs so radically from the works of Diodorus Siculus, Arrian, Quintus Curtius Rufus and Plutarch as to render them largely incomprehensible to those for whom the Hellenic historiographical tradition constitutes the norm." See Daniel Selden, "Iskander and the Idea of Iran", in *The Romance between Greece and the East*, ed. Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 142–143, emphasis in the original; cf. P.A. Brunt, "Persian Accounts of Alexander's Campaigns", *Classical Quarterly* 12 (1962).

provides a textured view of the Roman Alexander, with a level of chronological resolution that allows individual authors to be situated in distinct historical contexts. On the Iranian plateau, however, the Parthian and Sasanian Alexander traditions were not committed to writing until long after the Arab conquest, and the texts from this late period bear the indelible marks of the political and religious changes that transformed the region after the advent of Islam. The pre-Islamic Alexander cannot, therefore, be studied in isolation from the turbulent history of post-conquest Iran. Sasanian and, to a much lesser extent, Parthian memories of Alexander are accessible only through the works of poets, priests, and scholars who were themselves reinterpreting and reconstructing the pre-Islamic past in a land transformed by the arrival of a new religion.³

The literary evidence for Alexander's reception in pre-Islamic Iran can usefully be divided into two traditions, even if the lines between the two categories are often blurred.⁴ The first is what Ehsan Yarshater called "Iranian national history", which comprises authoritative collections of stories of the kings, heroes, and priests who featured so prominently in the legendary cycles of the ancient Iranian plateau.⁵ The second is Zoroastrian religious literature, namely didactic and apocalyptic texts written in Middle Persian. These two traditions preserve different interpretations of Alexander's legacy, but as sources for pre-Islamic Iranian views they share important features. Very little Iranian literature was written down before the late Sasanian period, and none of the texts available for study today achieved their current form until well after the Islamic conquest.⁶ It is generally agreed that some surviving material reflects oral traditions that had their roots in the distant past, perhaps even as far back as the Hellenis-

3 Cf. Sarah Bowen Savant, *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran: Tradition, Memory, and Conversion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 35.

4 For this distinction, see Arthur Christensen, *Les Kayanides* (Copenhagen: Andr. Fred. Høst & søn, 1931); Maria Macuch, "Pahlavi Literature", in *The Literature of Pre-Islamic Iran*, ed. Ronald E. Emmerick and Maria Macuch, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 176–177.

5 E. Yarshater, "Iranian National History", in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. E. Yarshater, vol. 3.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

6 For the emergence of Middle Persian literature during the Sasanian period, see Mary Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature", in *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, part 1, vol. 4, section 2 (Cologne, 1968), 31–33; Josef Wiesehöfer, "The 'Accursed' and the 'Adventurer': Alexander the Great in Iranian Tradition", in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Z. David Zuwiyya (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 115. On the redaction of Middle Persian literature in the centuries following the Islamic conquest, see Yarshater, "Iranian National History", 359–366; Jason Sion Mokhtarian, *Rabbis, Sorcerers, Kings, and Priests: The Culture of the Talmud in Ancient Iran* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 33–38.

tic period or the life of Alexander himself.⁷ But there is no clear stratigraphy between the older layers and the accumulations of successive centuries; the historical provenance of particular sections can be guessed at, but not established with certainty.

The most important source for Alexander's reception in the "Iranian national history" is the *Šāh-nāma* of Ferdowsi, composed under Samanid and then Ghaznavid rule from 976/7–1010 CE. While the extent of Ferdowsi's indebtedness to oral rather than textual sources has occasioned much debate, his poem likely made use of a prose work which in turn was based on Sasanian texts, including the *Xwadāy-nāmag* ("The Book of Lords"), a comprehensive account of ancient Iranian history assembled during the late Sasanian period.⁸ Ferdowsi was also influenced by the Syriac Alexander Romance, which he presumably

7 On orality in pre-Islamic Iran, see Kumiko Yamamoto, *The Oral Background of Persian Epics: Storytelling and Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Philip Huyse, "Late Sasanian Society between Orality and Literacy", in *The Sasanian Era*, ed. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis and Sarah Stewart (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008); M. Rahim Shayegan, *Aspects of History and Epic in Ancient Iran: From Gaumāta to Wahnām* (Washington, DC; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 73–108; Philip G. Kreyenbroek, "Storytelling, History and Communal Memory in Pre-Islamic Iran", in *Remembering the Past in Iranian Societies*, ed. Christine Allison and Philip G. Kreyenbroek (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013); Karl Reichl, "Memory and Textuality in the Orality-Literacy Continuum", in *Orality and Textuality in the Iranian World: Patterns of Interaction across the Centuries*, ed. Julia Rubanovich (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015).

8 For studies that emphasize the importance of oral sources to Ferdowsi's poem, see Olga M. Davidson, *Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), esp. 54–72; Olga M. Davidson, *Comparative Literature and Classical Persian Poetics: Seven Essays* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1999), 9–28; Olga M. Davidson, "Persian/Iranian Epic", in *A Companion to Ancient Epic*, ed. John Miles Foley (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 267–268; Dick Davis, "The Problem of Ferdowsi's Sources", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116.1 (1996); Yamamoto, *Oral Background*. But note the strong emphasis on written sources in Theodor Nöldeke, *The Iranian National Epic, or, The Shahnamah*, trans. Leonid Bogdanov (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1979 [1930]), 62–67; M. Omidshah, "Orality, Mouvement and Editorial Theory in Shāhnāma Studies", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 27 (2002); James Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis: Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 349. See further the discussions in Richard Stoneman, *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 24–32; Julia Rubanovich, "The Shāh-nāma and Medieval Orality: Critical Remarks on the 'Oral Poetics' Approach and New Perspectives", *Middle Eastern Literatures* 16.2 (2013); Yuhān Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina, "'The Ground Well Trodden But the Shah Not Found ...': Orality and Textuality in the 'Book of Kings' and the Zoroastrian Mythoeptic Tradition", in *Orality and Textuality in the Iranian World: Patterns of Interaction across the Cen-*

knew through translations.⁹ Another key source, both for Ferdowsi and for modern scholars, is the *Annals* of al-Tabari (839–923 CE), a scholar from the Persian province of Tabaristan who wrote in Arabic.¹⁰ Tabari also drew indirectly on the Book of Lords, and his preservation of multiple Alexander narratives gives some indication of the diverse traditions that circulated on the Iranian plateau.¹¹ A handful of other texts in Middle Persian, New Persian, and Arabic preserve facets of the “national history”, though none so extensively as Ferdowsi or Tabari.¹² Of particular interest are the *Letter of Tansar* and the *Book of the Deeds of Ardashir*, both Sasanian texts in origin.¹³ Also important is the

turies, ed. Julia Rubanovich (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015). On the *Xwadāy-nāmag* see Boyce, “Middle Persian Literature”, 57–59; A. Shahpur Shahbazi, “On the *Xwadāy-nāmag*”, in *Iranica Varia: Papers in Honor of Professor Ehsan Yarshater*, (Leiden: Brill, 1990); Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, “Al-Kisrawī and the Arabic Translations of the *Khwadāynāmag*”, *Studia Orientalia* 114 (2013).

- 9 Stoneman, *A Life in Legend*, 30–31; see also the discussion of sources in Haila Manteghi, “Alexander the Great in the *Shāhnāme*h of Ferdowsi”, in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman et al. (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing, 2012), 161–174. See also below, n. 29.
- 10 But note that Tabari also discussed Alexander in his *Tafsīr*, a work on the Quran: see Z. David Zuwiyya, “The Alexander Romance in the Arabic Tradition”, in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Z. David Zuwiyya (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 73.
- 11 For Tabari’s use of the Book of Lords, see Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis*, 314. For his accounts of Alexander, see El-Sayed M. Gad, “Al-Tabari’s Tales of Alexander: History and Romance”, in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman et al. (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing, 2012). For his relationship to pre-Islamic Iranian historical traditions more generally, see Savant, *New Muslims*, 41–47.
- 12 See Yarshater, “Iranian National History”, 361–366; Boyce, “Middle Persian Literature”, 55–61.
- 13 On the *Letter of Tansar*, see Mary Boyce, *The Letter of Tansar* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1968); Yarshater, “Iranian National History”, 63; Pierre Briant, *Darius in the Shadow of Alexander* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 364–365. The document survives only in a New Persian translation by one Ibn Isfandiyār, who in turn only knew it through an Arabic translation of the original Middle Persian. For the *Kār-nāmag ī Ardashīr ī Pābagān*, see the edition of Frantz Grenet, *Le geste d’Ardashīr fils de Pābag = Kār-nāmag ī Ardaxšēr ī Pābagān* (Die: Éditions A Die, 2003); see further Carlo G. Cereti, *La letteratura pahlavi: introduzione ai testi con riferimenti alla storia degli studi e alla tradizione manoscritta* (Milan: Mimesis, 2001), 192–200; Richard Stoneman, “Persian Aspects of the Romance Tradition”, in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman et al. (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing, 2012), 12–14.

Book of Darab, a 12th century CE Persian romance that supplies some additional details about Alexander's putative Persian father.¹⁴

Zoroastrian religious literature too reflects a long process of oral transmission, commission to writing during the (late) Sasanian period, and later redaction after the Muslim conquest.¹⁵ For students of Alexander's legacy there is little of interest in the Avesta and the Zand, the central text of the Zoroastrian faith and its exegesis. But several Middle Persian Zoroastrian texts comment on the conqueror's reign, a period of history that they couch in distinctly negative terms.¹⁶ The texts as we have them are productions of the early Islamic period, though they contain material that originated in Sasanian or even Parthian times.¹⁷ The oral traditions that they drew on may even preserve a dim memory of Alexander's invasion, though this is a contentious point.¹⁸

As far as the Roman material is concerned, it must first be emphasized that the study of the historical Alexander is inextricable from the study of his Roman reception. Arrian was a Roman office holder writing under Trajan, whose eastern campaigns in the early second century CE occasioned a renewed interest in the Macedonian conqueror.¹⁹ The other Alexander historians too looked back on the past from a Roman present. These authors had access to earlier accounts, of course, some of which were composed by Alexander's companions and contemporaries.²⁰ But their readings of the Hellenistic sources

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- 14 Marina Gaillard, *Alexandre le Grand en Iran: Le Dârâb Nâmeh d'Abu Tâher Tarsusi* (Paris: De Boccard, 2005).
 - 15 On Zoroastrian texts in Middle Persian, see J.P. de Menasce, "Zoroastrian Pahlavi Writings", in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. E. Yarshater, vol. 3.2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Macuch, "Pahlavi Literature."
 - 16 The passages pertaining to Alexander are collected in Touraj Daryaei, "Imitatio Alexandri and Its Impact on Late Arsacid, Early Sasanian and Middle Persian Literature", *Electrum* 12 (2007): 93–95; cf. M. Rahim Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians: Political Ideology in Post-Hellenistic and Late Antique Persia* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 295–297.
 - 17 Touraj Daryaei, "Zoroastrianism under Islamic Rule", in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism*, ed. Michael Stausberg and Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 109–110.
 - 18 See below, p. 206.
 - 19 On Arrian's career in the Roman east see A.B. Bosworth, *From Arrian to Alexander: Studies in Historical Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 16–25; on interest in Alexander's eastern conquests during the reign of Trajan see Richard Stoneman, *Alexander the Great* 2nd ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 5–6; Angela Kühnen, *Die imitatio Alexandri in der römischen Politik* (1. Jh. v. Chr.–3. Jh. n. Chr.) (Münster: Rhema Verlag, 2008), 167–168.
 - 20 On the sources and methods of the Alexander historians, see N.G.L. Hammond, *Three His-*

were shaped by the conditions of the late Republic and early Principate, and their notions of conquest and empire were influenced by their status as Roman subjects.²¹

Alexander historiography aside, a wealth of material from oratory, philosophy, biography, and poetry captures Roman attitudes towards Alexander with much greater chronological precision than the Iranian sources.²² Material evidence plays a role as well, since some scholars have detected conscious evocation of Alexander in the busts of late Republican strongmen and the coinage of particular emperors.²³ The Romans were interested not only in the magnitude of Alexander's conquests, but also in the moral qualities of a ruler who had achieved such great yet perilous heights.²⁴ Like the Persians, they took a range of positions on the king's virtues and vices. Moreover, the relative certainty with which the pertinent texts can be dated means that the views of Roman authors can be situated in their historical and political contexts to an extent that Iranian views cannot.

Another important feature of the Roman literature is that it occasionally speaks for the Iranians, attributing statements to Parthian or Sasanian rulers

torians of Alexander the Great: The So-Called Vulgate Authors, Diodorus, Justin and Curtius (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); N.G.L. Hammond, *Sources for Alexander the Great: An Analysis of Plutarch's Life and Arrian's Anabasis Alexandrou* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Bosworth, *From Arrian to Alexander* on Arrian; and Elizabeth Baynham, *Alexander the Great: The Unique History of Quintus Curtius* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998) on Curtius Rufus.

- 21 On the production of Alexander histories in a Roman context, see John Atkinson, "Originality and Its Limits in the Alexander Sources of the Early Empire", in *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction*, ed. A.B. Bosworth and E.J. Baynham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Diana Spencer, *The Roman Alexander: Reading a Cultural Myth* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 9–38; Diana Spencer, "Roman Alexanders: Epistemology and Identity", in *Alexander the Great: A New History*, ed. Waldemar Heckel and Lawrence Tritle (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009); Briant, *Darius in the Shadow of Alexander*, 202–214; Thomas Hahn, "East and West, Cosmopolitan and Imperial in the Roman Alexander", in *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages: Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. Markus Stock (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 13.
- 22 Many of the most important passages are reproduced as readings in Spencer, *The Roman Alexander*.
- 23 See e.g. Dorothea Michel, *Alexander als Vorbild für Pompeius, Caesar und Marcus Antonius: Archäologische Untersuchungen* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1967); Kühnen, *Die imitatio Alexandri*.
- 24 Richard Stoneman, "The Legacy of Alexander in Ancient Philosophy", in *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great*, ed. Joseph Roisman (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), 325–326; Sabine Müller, *Alexander, Makedonien und Persien* (Berlin: Trafo, 2014), 115.

that specify their relationship to Alexander and/or the Achaemenid Empire that he conquered.²⁵ Such passages present their own methodological difficulties, and the authenticity of the Persian views that they purport to represent has occasioned much debate.²⁶ The nature of the Iranian evidence rarely allows for direct confirmation or rejection. It is possible, of course, to consider the implications of the supposedly Iranian sentiments found in the Greco-Roman literary texts. But it was common practice in ancient historiography to put Roman ideas into the mouths of barbarians, and the value of such passages as evidence for Iranian attitudes may be minimal.²⁷ What appear to be Parthian or Sasanian interpretations of Alexander and the Achaemenids may be no more than Romans indulging in a Persianizing fantasy.

Finally, the sprawling traditions of the Alexander Romance wound their way through both Rome and Persia, promulgating a diverse collection of stories that mixed history with saga and myth. From a recension in Greek at some point between the second and fourth centuries CE, versions of the Romance proliferated in a number of languages—including Latin—that gave the tradition a broad geographical impact in Roman and Persian territories and beyond.²⁸ The possible existence of a Middle Persian Alexander Romance remains a contentious subject, and this body of literature might have enjoyed considerable popularity among Sasanian ruling elites.²⁹ But no Middle Persian text survives

25 See Tac. *Ann.* 6.31.1; Cass. Dio 80.3.4; Herodian 6.2.1–2, 6.2.6–7, 6.4.5; Julian *Or.* 2.63a–b; Amm. Marc. 17.5.5.

26 See below, pp. 210–211.

27 For the Roman use of barbarian mouthpieces, see Eric Adler, *Valorizing the Barbarians: Enemy Speeches in Roman Historiography* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2011). As Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg (“Yauna by the Sea and across the Sea”, in *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity*, ed. I. Malkin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 340) argued for Greek historiography on the Achaemenids, “Persians on Greeks are really Greeks on Persians and therefore Greeks on Greeks.” The same problem applies to Roman historiography on the Parthians and Sasanians.

28 On the date of the Greek recension, see Ken Dowden, “The Alexander Romance”, in *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, ed. B.P. Reardon (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 650.

29 Theodor Nöldeke (“Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans”, *Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften Classe, phil-hist. Klasse* 38.5 (1890)) argued that the Syriac version of the Romance was produced in the early 7th century CE from a Middle Persian version of Pseudo-Callisthenes, and the view still has adherents (Daryaei, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 89; Macuch, “Pahlavi Literature”, 175; Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, “Alexander the Great in the Syriac Literary Tradition”, in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Z. David Zuwiyya (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 42) and opponents (Richard

for study. An assessment of the Romance's significance in Persia must therefore include the traditions in Syriac as well as Arabic, which were widely disseminated throughout Iran with the arrival of Islam.

Politics, History, and Analogy

An essential feature of Alexander's reception in both Iran and Rome was the use of his memory to support a historical analogy. For commentators on both sides of the Euphrates, there was a strong continuity between Alexander's invasion of the powerful empire on his eastern frontier and the deep-seated Roman instinct to seek new imperial acquisitions at the expense of the Parthians and the Sasanians. The difference was the direction in which the continuity ran.

In the Iranian sources, Alexander's eastern imperialism was an early manifestation of Roman imperialism, because Alexander was a Roman. His description as such in the Iranian evidence is clear and consistent. In the Zoroastrian texts he is variously called "Alexander the Caesar from Rome"³⁰ or "Alexander the Roman".³¹ In some passages, the men who served in his armies are called Romans as well.³² The same holds true for other texts in Middle Persian or descended from Middle Persian sources, like the *Book of the Deeds of Ardashir*, the *Letter of Tansar*, and the *Book of Darab*.³³ According to Ferdowsi in the *Šāh-nāma*, "the king in Rome was Philip", who along with Alexander was also called by the appellation of Caesar.³⁴ Nor is there any apparent incompatibil-

N. Frye, "Two Iranian Notes", in *Papers in Honour of Prof. M. Boyce*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 185–187; C.A. Ciancaglini, "The Syriac Version of the Alexander Romance", *Le Muséon* 114 (2001): 121–140. If a Middle Persian Romance did indeed make an impact in late antique Iran, its popularity would presumably have been among the nobility, not the Zoroastrian clergy: see Wiesehöfer, "Accursed and Adventurer", 128.

30 *Bundahišn* 33.19 = Fazlollah Pakzad, *Bundahišn: Zoroastrische Kosmogonie und Kosmologie* (Tehran: Centre for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia, 2005), 366: "aleksandar ī kēsar az hrōm".

31 *Abdih ud sahiḡih ī zamīg ī Sīstān* 13: "alaksandar ī hrōmīg"; *Zand ī Wahman Yasn* 7.32 = Carlo G. Cereti, *The Zand ī Wahman Yasn: A Zoroastrian Apocalypse* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1995), 144: "aleksandar ī hrōmāyīg"; *Ardā Wirāz Nāmag* 1.3: "aleksandar ī hrōmāyīg".

32 *Dēnkard* 3B; 4C = Helmut Humbach, Josef Elfenbein, and Prods O. Skjærvø, *The Gāthās of Zarathushtra and the Other Old Avestan Texts* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1991), 52–53.

33 *Kār-nāmag ī Ardašīr ī Pābagān* 1.1 = Grenet, *La geste d'Ardashir*, 52–53; *Letter of Tansar* = Boyce, *Letter of Tansar*, 26 and n. 2; *Dārāb-nāmeḥ* = Gaillard, *Dārāb Nāmeḥ*, 128–129.

34 Ferdowsi, *Šāh-nāma* = Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, *Abu'l-Qasem Ferdowsi: The Shahnameh*

ity between Alexander's identity as a Roman on the one hand and his supposed birth in the land of Greece or Egypt on the other.³⁵ The texts associate the king with Roman power even where they make him the ruler of non-Roman political entities.

"Rome" was hardly a fixed point of reference in late antique and post-conquest Iran, of course, and the clergy, poets, and scholars who contributed to the Iranian Alexander traditions would have understood the geographical designation in various ways both before and after the arrival of the Arabs. In the world of early Islam, the word *Rūm* most often meant the curtailed Byzantine state of Asia Minor, though it could still refer to the erstwhile Mediterranean empire and, eventually, to the lands of the Christian north more generally.³⁶ But while the meaning and location of Rome shifted, Alexander's identification as a leader of this realm remained. As Rome moved, the memory of the conqueror moved with it.

The same Zoroastrian texts that call Alexander a Roman preserve a harsh judgment of his character and kingship. The "accursed" Alexander is accused of various crimes against the Good Religion: the assassination of rulers, the murder of priests, the destruction of archives, the burning of holy texts, and even the translation of the Avesta into Greek.³⁷ Many of these charges are likely to have been no more accurate than the labelling of the Macedonian conqueror as a Roman; most scholars agree, for instance, that the Avesta would not have existed in written form during the fourth century BCE, and thus would have been unavailable for Alexander to desecrate.³⁸ Nevertheless, the memory

(*The Book of Kings*), vol. 5 (Costa Mesa, CA: New York: Mazda Publishers, 1997), 519, line 44: به روم اندرون شاه بد فیلقوس; cf. 524, lines 110–111.

- 35 In the *Ardā Wirāz Nāmag* 1.3, for instance, Alexander is "*aleksandar ī hrōmāyīg ī muzrāyīg mānišn*", or "Alexander the Roman who lived in Egypt". Cf. Ps. Callisth. 1.1–14.
- 36 Koray Durak, "Who Are the Romans? The Definition of *Bilād Al-Rūm* (Land of the Romans) in Medieval Islamic Geographies", *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 31.3 (2010): 287. See also Cemal Kafadar, "A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rūm", *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 9–10, with further discussion of the term's referents during the Seljuk period.
- 37 See the passages collected in Daryaei, "Imitatio Alexandri", 93–95 with the discussion in Wiesehöfer, "Accursed and Adventurer", 124–125. Tabari preserves similar accusations: see 701 = Moshe Perlmann, *The History of Al-Tabarī*, vol. 4 (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987), 94.
- 38 On the commission of the Avesta to writing, see Mary Boyce and Frantz Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 16–17; Wiesehöfer, "Accursed and Adventurer", 145; Prods O. Skjærvø, "Avestan Society", in *The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History*, ed. Touraj Daryaei (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 58.

became deeply embedded in Zoroastrian tradition. The king's Roman identity went hand in hand with his reputation as an enemy of pre-Islamic Iran's most important religion.

Since our Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts are overwhelmingly productions of the eighth through tenth centuries CE, their pronouncements on Alexander should be situated in their early Islamic contexts. The Arab conquest took a political, financial, and demographic toll on the Zoroastrians of the Iranian plateau, and while relations with Muslims were not always adversarial, the collection and preservation of the Good Religion's teachings seem to have been spurred by the pressures of foreign invasion and the erosion of the faith's historically close relationship with the wielders of political power.³⁹ In this respect, Alexander's campaigns may have offered ancient parallels to the depredations of the Arabs; Zoroastrianism's misfortunes at the hands of Iran's recent conquerors shaped its interpretations of the Macedonian invasion.⁴⁰

But post-conquest Zoroastrians also worked with material that bore the weight of long tradition. As many scholars have argued, Alexander's designation as a Roman is likely to have emerged from the long history of conflict between the Parthians and Romans and, later, the Sasanians and Byzantines. Since the empires of Iran and Rome clashed repeatedly from the first century BCE through the seventh CE, the Iranians projected a Roman identity onto an enemy from the remote past.⁴¹ This is not to say that their traditions had lost all original memories from the time of Alexander. It may well be the case that the Zoroastrian depiction of the king as a sacrilegious despoiler was, in origin, the result of the chaos unleashed by his armies during his invasion of the Iranian plateau.⁴² But the later rivalry between Persia and Rome seems to have

39 See Jamsheed K. Choksy, *Conflict and Cooperation: Zoroastrian Subalterns and Muslim Elites in Medieval Iranian Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), esp. 114–119; Savant, *New Muslims*, 113–115; Daryaei, “Zoroastrianism under Islamic Rule”, 109–110.

40 On the parallels between Alexander's invasion and the Arab conquests, see also Albert de Jong, “Religion and Politics in Pre-Islamic Iran”, in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism*, ed. Michael Stausberg and Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 94.

41 Theodor Nöldeke, “Geschichte des Artachšîr i Pâpakân, aus dem Pehlewi übersetzt, mit Erläuterungen und einer Einleitung versehen”, *Bezzenger's Beiträge zur Kunde der indogermanischen Sprachen* 4 (1878), 36 n. 1; Gaillard, *Dârâb Nâmesh*, 18–19; Daryaei, “Imitatio Alexandri.”

42 Frye, “Two Iranian Notes”, 187–188; Philippe Gignoux, “La démonisation d'Alexandre le Grand d'après la littérature pehlevie”, in *Iranian Languages and Texts from Iran and Turan*, ed. Maria Macuch et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007); Josef Wiesehöfer, “Zum Nachleben von Achaimeniden und Alexander”, in *Achaemenid History VII: Continuity*

imparted a Roman identity to Alexander that became fused with earlier traditions. Modern researchers may attempt to disentangle the older and newer threads, but there is no indication that late antique and post-conquest Iranians would have done so.

The Roman tradition operated in a different way. The Romans never described Alexander as anything but a Macedonian king; they never claimed him so literally as one of their own. They did, however, believe that the process of conquest and expansion afforded their most powerful commanders the opportunity to follow in Alexander's footsteps—to carve a greater empire out of the same eastern lands that Alexander had once invaded, whether for good ends or bad. The idea that the Macedonian king's political and military career served as a model has received much scholarly discussion under the label of *imitatio Alexandri*, or the imitation of Alexander.⁴³ The concept has been fruitfully applied to Hellenistic history and particularly to Seleucid kingship, but most studies in this vein have focused on Romans of the late Republic or the Principate.⁴⁴

and Change. Proceedings of the Last Achaemenid History Workshop, April 6–8, 1990—Ann Arbor, Michigan, ed. Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg et al. (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1994), 395; Wiesehöfer, "Accursed and Adventurer", 125–126; de Jong, "Religion and Politics in Pre-Islamic Iran", 94; but cf. Briant, *Darius in the Shadow of Alexander*, 370; Touraj Daryaee, "Refashioning the Zoroastrian Past: From Alexander to Islam", in *The Zoroastrian Flame: Exploring Religion, History and Tradition*, ed. A. Williams et al. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 137.

- 43 An ancient use of this phrase may be Seneca's *furiosi et externi et infelicitur superbi regis imitatio* (*De Brev.* 18.5), though it is not clear that the words refer to Alexander; see S.J.V. Malloch, "Gaius' Bridge at Baiae and Alexander-Imitatio", *Classical Quarterly* 51.1 (2001): 208–209.
- 44 On the *imitatio Alexandri* during the Hellenistic period, see Claudia Bohm, *Imitatio Alexandri im Hellenismus: Untersuchungen zum politischen Nachwirken Alexanders des Großen in Hoch- und Späthellenistischen Monarchien* (Munich: tuduv, 1989); Andrew F. Stewart, *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). For the concept in Egyptian literature, see Kim Ryholt, "Imitatio Alexandri in Egyptian Literary Tradition", in *The Romance between Greece and the East*, ed. Tim Whitmarsh and Stuart Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). For key studies on the Roman *imitatio Alexandri*, see Alfred Heuss, "Alexander der Große und die politische Ideologie des Altertums", *Antike und Abendland* 4 (1954): 65–104; Michel, *Alexander als Vorbild*; Otto Weippert, "Alexander-Imitatio und römische Politik in republikanischer Zeit", (PhD diss., Bayerische Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, 1972); Erich S. Gruen, "Rome and the Myth of Alexander", in *Ancient History in a Modern University*, vol. 1, ed. T.W. Hillard et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 178–191; Spencer, *The Roman Alexander*; Kühnen, *Die imitatio Alexandri*.

Debate persists as to how the Roman *imitatio Alexandri* should be understood. For would-be Roman conquerors of the East, was the desire to match or exceed Alexander's achievements a genuine commitment, or were Alexandrian echoes merely useful propaganda tools to justify foreign campaigns to a domestic audience?⁴⁵ Then again, Alexander's example may have been less a consideration for Roman commanders than it was for the authors who chronicled their lives; perhaps the drawing of parallels was a literary device, not a political strategy.⁴⁶ The debate need not be resolved here, and at any rate the possibilities are not mutually exclusive. Whether the *imitatio* belonged more to the realm of history or rhetoric, the figure of Alexander occupied a prominent place in how the Romans thought and wrote about eastern conquest—a prospect that never ceased to entice Roman leaders.

A few examples will suffice to illustrate the prominence and longevity of Alexander's example. In the first century BCE, Gnaeus Pompey Magnus "believed himself to be similar to king Alexander and vied with him in his achievements and plans", according to his contemporary Sallust.⁴⁷ Nearly two centuries later, Trajan would couch his Parthian campaign in terms of both reverence for and rivalry with the Macedonian; he offered sacrifices to the king's memory at Babylon, but also wrote to the Senate to proclaim that his own campaign had advanced farther east than Alexander's.⁴⁸ And in the fourth century CE,

45 *Imitatio Alexandri* as a sincere motive: Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East, 31BC–AD337* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1993), 142–143; D.S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay, AD180–395* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 142–143. For the propaganda value of Alexandrian parallels, see Andreas Luther, "Zum Orientfeldzug des Gaius Caesar", *Gymnasium* 117 (2010) on Gaius Caesar; Malloch, "Gaius' Bridge" on Caligula; and Kühnen, *Die imitatio Alexandri*, 150–151 on Nero.

46 For this view, see F.E. Adcock, "Caesar's Dictatorship", in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ed. S.A. Cook et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 739; Peter Green, "Caesar and Alexander: Aemulatio, Imitatio, and Comparatio", in *Classical Bearings: Interpreting Ancient History and Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 194; Gruen, "Rome and the Myth of Alexander", 182–188; cf. Erich S. Gruen, "Review of *The Roman Alexander: Reading a Cultural Myth* by Diana Spencer", *The International History Review* 25.3 (2003): 639–641.

47 Sall. *Hist.* 3.88 M: *similem fore se credens Alexandro regi, facta consultaque eius quidem aemulatus erat*. Gruen ("Rome and the Myth of Alexander", 184–185) stresses that the sentence is a fragment devoid of context. But it is good evidence from a contemporary that Alexander was a yardstick against which Pompey measured his own career; cf. Kühnen, *Die imitatio Alexandri*, 74–75; Kathryn Welch and Hannah Mitchell, "Revisiting the Roman Alexander", *Antichthon* 47 (2013): 88.

48 Cass. Dio 68.29.1, 30.1; cf. G. Wirth, "Alexander und Rom", in *Alexandre le Grand: image*

as Julian marched east to fight the Sasanian king Shapur II, the orator Libanius described his native Antioch to the emperor as “a city of Alexander, who moved along the same course that you do.”⁴⁹

On one level, then, Alexander’s invasion of Persia in the fourth century BCE furnished a historical precedent for Roman-Parthian and later Roman-Sasanian armed conflict. As Alexander had won power, glory, and territory in the East at the expense of the Persians, so generations of Roman leaders would clash with their Parthian and Sasanian counterparts in the name of conquest and empire. For some observers in Rome and on the Iranian plateau, these clashes could be interpreted as re-runs of Alexander’s original *anabasis*, now seen as a formative struggle between East and West that had set the stage for what was to come. The Macedonian king’s place had been taken by Romans who sought to replicate or even surpass what he had achieved—again with an Iranian empire arrayed against them.

But while both sides might view Rome’s eastern campaigns as analogous with Alexander’s original invasion, the evidence suggests a crucial difference in the way that they conceived of their histories. The Romans imagined their commanders as new (and in some cases improved) versions of the Macedonian conqueror; they described the present in terms of the past. The Iranians, however, assigned to their ancient enemy an identity—“Roman”—that belonged to their contemporary imperial rivals; they described the past in terms of the present. The end result was much the same: both approaches to history fostered the impression that the East and the West had long been at war with one another, and that Alexander’s age had sown the seeds of a deep antagonism.⁵⁰ But the contours of the traditions were different. In Iran, the present was a way to frame the past; in Rome, it was the other way around.

The Greco-Roman sources do not stop at drawing parallels between Alexander the Great and Rome’s generals; they go one step further, and complete the analogy. If the Romans were the heirs to the great Macedonian’s eastern campaign of conquest, then their Parthian and Sasanian enemies had to be

et réalité: 7 exposés suivis de discussions, ed. E. Badian (Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1976), 198.

49 Lib. *Or.* 15.79: πόλις Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ τὰ αὐτὰ σοι δραμόντος. For other comparisons of Julian to Alexander (including some comments by Julian himself), see Rowland Smith, “The Casting of Julian the Apostate ‘in the Likeness’ of Alexander the Great: A Topos in Antique Historiography and Its Modern Echoes”, *Histos* 5 (2011) and R.J. Lane Fox, “The Itinerary of Alexander: Constantius to Julian”, *Classical Quarterly* 47.1 (1997): 250–251, who downplays Julian’s conscious imitation of Alexander.

50 Cf. Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, 154; Gaillard, *Dârâb Nâmeh*, 18–19.

reborn versions of the Achaemenids who had opposed him. In a practice that would continue for centuries, Roman authors of the Augustan period increasingly began to model their descriptions of the Parthians on earlier portrayals of the Achaemenids in Greek literature. Just as the distinction between “Mede” and “Persian” was often elided in the Classical period, now the Parthians could be called Medes, Persians, and Achaemenids—all terms that had referred to the descendants of Cyrus the Great and the inhabitants of his empire.⁵¹ The practice continued apace well into the Sasanian period.⁵² As long as ambitious Roman generals with eastern commands were ready to follow in Alexander’s footsteps, the Parthians and Sasanians provided rough and ready equivalents of the Achaemenids who had ruled the Near East during the king’s lifetime.

Were such descriptions faithful to an Iranian understanding of history? Or were they no more than an *interpretatio Romana*, a genealogy invented by the Romans and projected onto the Persian empires of the first centuries CE?⁵³ Answers have varied.⁵⁴ As noted above, several passages in Roman historiog-

51 Michael Wissemann, *Die Parther in der augusteischen Dichtung* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1982), 122–123; Holger Sonnabend, *Fremdenbild und Politik: Vorstellungen der Römer von Ägypten und dem Partherreich in der späten Republik und frühen Kaiserzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1986), 280–288; Antony Spawforth, “Symbol of Unity? The Persian-Wars Tradition in the Roman Empire”, in *Greek Historiography*, ed. Simon Hornblower (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1994), 237–243; Rolf Michael Schneider, “Die Faszination des Feindes: Bilder der Parther und des Orients in Rom”, in *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse = The Arsacid Empire—Sources and Documentation: Beiträge des internationalen Colloquiums, Eutin (27.–30. Juni 1996)*, ed. Josef Wiesehöfer (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998), 111; Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 375–376; Briant, *Darius in the Shadow of Alexander*, 204–206. On the classical elision between “Mede” and “Persian”, see Christopher Tuplin, “Persians as Medes”, in *Continuity and Change: Proceedings of the Last Achaemenid History Workshop, April 6–8, 1990, Ann Arbor, Michigan*, ed. Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg et al. (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1994), 238–251. The Roman view of the Achaemenid heritage of the Parthians coexisted with other theories of their Scythian origin: see Stefan Hauser, “Die ewigen Nomaden: Bemerkungen zu Herkunft, Militär, Staatsaufbau und nomadischen Traditionen der Arsakiden”, in *Krieg-Gesellschaft-Institutionen: Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Kriegsgeschichte*, ed. Burkhard Meißner et al. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005), 170–185; Charlotte Lerouge, *L’image des Parthes dans le monde gréco-romain* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2007), 174–185.

52 See the passages discussed in Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians*, 30–41.

53 For the term, see Erich Kettenhofen, “Die Einforderung des Achämenidenbes durch Ardasir: Eine Interpretatio Romana”, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 15 (1984).

54 For those who deny that the Parthians and Sasanians made direct appeals to Achaemenid heritage, see E. Yarshater, “Were the Sasanians Heirs to the Achaemenids?” in *Atti del*

raphy contain proclamations from Iranian rulers that mount claims to former Achaemenid territories on the basis of putative descent.⁵⁵ If some of these passages raise suspicions, others come from reputable authors like Tacitus and Ammianus who are generally thought not to have taken undue liberties with the reporting of documents.⁵⁶ Still, the addition of claims to Achaemenid heritage would not be surprising given the conventions of ancient historiography.⁵⁷ In the absence of corroborating evidence from Parthian or Sasanian territory, the Greco-Roman literary sources cannot be trusted to speak for the Iranian view of the past.

The late date of the eastern literary evidence leaves much on the Iranian side unclear, but it does give a sense of the relevant traditions. Where the classical Mediterranean sources relied on early Greek historiography for their information about the Achaemenids, the Iranian memory of the dynasty was likely to have been rooted in the oral compositions, both legendary and religious, that dominated the Parthian and Sasanian view of the past.⁵⁸ Some early Islamic sources remember Alexander's opponent not as Darius III the Achaemenid but as Dārā the Kayanian, the last scion of a dynasty whose origins were in

Convegno internazionale sul tema: La Persia nel Medioevo. (Roma, 31 Marzo–5 Aprile 1970) (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1971), 519; Kettenhofen, "Die Einforderung des Achämeniderbes"; Philip Huyse, "La revendication de territoires achéménides par les Sassanides: une réalité historique?" in *Iran: Questions et connaissances*, vol. 1, ed. Philip Huyse (Paris: Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, 2002), 297–311; Huyse, "Late Sasanian Society", 152–153. For less unequivocal discussions, see Josef Wiesehöfer, "Iranische Ansprüche an Rom auf ehemals achaimenidische Territorien", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran N.F.* 19 (1986): 177–185; Josef Wiesehöfer, "Gebete für die 'Urahnen' oder: Wann und wie verschwanden Kyros und Dareios aus der historischen Tradition Irans?" in *Tradition and Innovation in the Ancient World*, ed. Edward Dąbrowa (Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2002), 111–117; Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians*. Touraj Daryaee has argued that the Sasanians knew of the Achaemenids, but wrote them out of their history in favor of the Kayanians, who were more closely aligned with Zoroastrian religious authority; see Touraj Daryaee, "National History or Keyanid History?: The Nature of Sasanid Zoroastrian Historiography", *Iranian Studies* 28.3/4 (1995); Touraj Daryaee, "The Construction of the Past in Late Antique Persia", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 55.4 (2006).

55 Tac. *Ann.* 6.31.1; Cass. Dio 80.3.4; Herodian 6.2.1–2, 6.2.6–7, 6.4.5; Amm. Marc. 17.5.5.

56 D.S. Potter rejects the testimony of Herodian for the reign of Ardashir, for instance, but accepts that of Ammianus for Shapur II (*Roman Empire at Bay*, 223, 460–461).

57 See the literature cited above, n. 27.

58 Matthew P. Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth: Art and Ritual of Kingship between Rome and Sasanian Iran* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 47–48.

the realm of myth.⁵⁹ In the *Šāh-nāma*, for instance, Dārā “exalted the Kayanian crown to the sun” after ascending the throne.⁶⁰ Dārā’s origins are unclear, but some scholars locate them in late antiquity, when the Alexander Romance tradition began to work its way into a Sasanian version of the *Xwadāy-nāmag*.⁶¹ Although names like Artaxerxes and Darius seem to preserve correspondences between the Achaemenids and Kayanians, in the final analysis the two dynasties come from different, and irreconcilable, historical traditions.⁶²

So while the Parthians and Sasanians did not follow the Romans in describing themselves as “Achaemenids”, they may nevertheless have seen connections between their own families and the Kayanian dynasty that had died out in the wake of Alexander’s campaigns. The *Šāh-nāma* traces the lineage of the Sasanian founder Ardashir back to Dārā, whose son Sāsān escaped the depredations of Alexander by fleeing to India.⁶³ The *Book of the Deeds of Ardashir* preserves the same genealogy.⁶⁴ Tabari knew of traditions that held Dārā to be the father not only of Ardashir but also of Ashak—the founder of the Parthian kingdom, known to the Greek world as Arsaces.⁶⁵ In a word, the Parthians and Sasanians did not need to know who the Achaemenids were in order to trace their ancestry back to Alexander’s Persian opponent.

59 Selden, “Iskander and the Idea of Iran”, 152; Briant, *Darius in the Shadow of Alexander*, 360. On the Kayanians in the Avesta, see Daryaei, “National History or Keyanid History”, 136–137; on the Kayanian heroic cycle, see Mary Boyce, “Some Remarks on the Transmission of the Kayanian Heroic Cycle”, in *Serta Cantabrigiensia* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1954); Yarshater, “Iranian National History”, 461–473.

60 Khaleghi-Motlagh, *Shahnameh*, vol. 5, 529, line 1: به خورشید تاج کی بر فراشت.

61 Mario Grignaschi, “La *Nihāyatu-l-‘Arab fī Ahbāri-l-Furs Wa-l-‘Arab et les Siyarū Mulūki-l-‘Ağam* du Ps. Ibn-al-Muqaffā”, *Bulletin d’études orientales* 26 (1973): 98–99; cf. Julia Rubanovich, “Why So Many Stories? Untangling the Versions of Iskandar’s Birth and Upbringing”, in *Orality and Textuality in the Iranian World: Patterns of Interaction across the Centuries*, ed. Julia Rubanovich (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), 203–205.

62 Briant, *Darius in the Shadow of Alexander*, 362.

63 For the narrative, see Davis, *Shahnameh*, 530–531.

64 *Kārnāmag ī Ardašīr ī Pābagān* 1.5–6 = Grenet, *La geste d’Ardashir*, 54–55; cf. Parvaneh Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: The Sasanian-Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 385–386; Briant, *Darius in the Shadow of Alexander*, 364.

65 Or, alternately, Dārā’s father, also named Dārā or sometimes Dārāb. See Tabari 700, 704, 709 = Perlmann, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 4, 93–100; cf. Tabari 814 = C.E. Bosworth, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 3. Other Islamic authors report the same genealogy; see Yarshater, “Iranian National History”, 475 and n. 1.

The imagined descent of Arsaces and Ardashir from Dārā may have further contributed to a negative view of Alexander's kingship over the Iranian plateau. In the *Letter of Tansar*, the king's councillor Aristotle advocates a policy of divide and rule to keep the newly-conquered land of Iran quiescent: Alexander should foment rivalry among the Persian nobility so that, fighting with one another, they "would not be free to think upon the past."⁶⁶ By turning the land over to squabbling petty kings, Alexander robbed Iran of its traditional cohesiveness and erased the memory of its greatness under the Kayanians—a greatness that, according to the *Letter*, would not be re-achieved until the conquests of Ardashir. Ferdowsi too speaks of Iranian disarray after Alexander's death, and Tabari intones that "Persian rule continued to break down until the rise of Ardashir."⁶⁷ To be sure, this view stems in part from Sasanian propaganda designed to belittle the Arsacid dynasty which they overthrew.⁶⁸ But it is nonetheless telling that Alexander, not Arsaces, was held to be the cause of the deluge from the Kayanian period.

Along with the identification of Alexander as a Roman, the putative descent of the Sasanians from Dārā seems to have affected how the dynasty justified its campaigns of plunder and conquest against the Romans. The *Letter of Tansar* explains Ardashir's western foreign policy as follows:

He [Ardashir] has devoted all his thoughts to attacking the Romans and pursuing his quarrel against that people; and he will not rest until he has avenged Darius [Dārā] against the successors of Alexander.⁶⁹

Persistent doubts about the dating of the *Letter* mean that it is impossible to know whether such a statement actually figured in the royal proclamations of Ardashir himself.⁷⁰ But if the document does indeed have a Sasanian provenance, it shows that, by the sixth century CE at the latest, Sasanian wars with Rome could be explained as campaigns of vengeance against the empire from which Alexander had launched his invasion of Iran.⁷¹ An echo of this idea in Parthian propaganda may survive in the Muslim author Abū Mansūr al-Ta'ālībī (961–1038 CE). His history mentions a leader named Afqūr Šāh, probably to be

66 Translation from Boyce, *Letter of Tansar*, 28.

67 Davis, *Shahnameh*, 530; quotation from Perlmann, *The History of Al-Tabarī*, vol. 4, 98.

68 Wiesehöfer, "Iranische Ansprüche", 177.

69 Translation from Boyce, *Letter of Tansar*, 65, adapted.

70 On the dating of the document, see the literature cited above, n. 13.

71 Cf. Richard Payne, "Cosmology and the Expansion of the Iranian Empire, 502–628 CE", *Past and Present* 220.1 (2013): 23, on Ardashir's "procurement of reparations from Rome."

identified with the Arsacid Pacorus, whose successful campaigns against the Romans are supposed to have obtained vengeance for Alexander's fallen foe Dārā.⁷² Even if the Achaemenids had lapsed into historical obscurity, then, the memory of Darius persisted and mattered. It linked the Parthians and Sasanians to the glorious Iranian past, and it animated a new struggle with Alexander's "successors" in the west.

A final consideration for the question of analogy is how and whether the Iranian and Roman traditions were in dialogue with one another. Were the Parthians and Sasanians aware of the *imitatio Alexandri* in Rome, and if so, how did the Roman espousal of Alexander's example influence their own views of the conqueror? Conversely, when the Sasanians claimed to be restoring the glory that Persia had known under Darius III and his predecessors, what sort of reaction might this propaganda have spurred in Rome? Direct evidence for the exchange of historical traditions is scarce, but some scholars have persuasively suggested that the Iranian and Roman Alexanders may have fed into one another, deepening the idea that the Romans stood in Alexander's shoes while the Persians stood in Darius'.⁷³ Recent scholarship has discussed how developments in Iranian and Roman political ideology were put in dialogue with one another as diplomats, merchants, and missionaries circulated between the Mediterranean and the Near East.⁷⁴ The transmission of Alexander narratives

72 See Yarshater, "Iranian National History", 475. On this Pacorus in Greco-Roman literature, see Margarete Karras-Klapproth, *Prosopographische Studien zur Geschichte des Partherreiches auf der Grundlage antiker literarischer Überlieferung* (Bonn: In Kommission bei R. Habelt, 1988), 119–123. Cf. Josef Wiesehöfer, "Röm as Enemy of Iran", in *Cultural Borrowings and Ethnic Appropriations in Antiquity*, ed. Erich S. Gruen (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2005), 115: "Such a story can hardly be of Sasanian origin; it must have been a survival of the Parthian view of the conflict between East and West."

73 Touraj Daryaee, "The Changing 'Image of the World': Geography and Imperial Propaganda in Ancient Persia", in *Tradition and Innovation in the Ancient World*, ed. Edward Dąbrowa (Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2002), 102; Daryaee, "Imitatio Alexandri"; Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians*, esp. 340–349.

74 For political ideology, see Josef Wiesehöfer, *Iranien, Grecs et Romains* (Paris: Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, 2005), 111–149; Canepa, *Two Eyes*; Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians*. For the diffusion of ideas, see John F. Matthews, "Hostages, Philosophers, Pilgrims, and the Diffusion of Ideas in the Late Roman Mediterranean and Near East", in *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity*, ed. F.M. Clover and R.S. Humphreys (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 29–50. Rika Gyselen, "Romans and Sasanians in the Third Century: Propaganda Warfare and Ambiguous Imagery", in *Commutatio et Contentio: Studies in the Late Roman, Sasanian, and Early Islamic Near East*, ed. Josef Wiesehöfer and Henning Börm (Düsseldorf: Wellem Verlag, 2010) uses

could have been part of these exchanges, and it may even have deepened the identification of both empires with the figures they saw as their imperial predecessors.

In sum, the reception of Alexander in both Iran and Rome supported an interpretation of their relationship that rested on a historical analogy. For ambitious Roman commanders and the authors who wrote about them, eastern campaigns against the Parthians or Sasanians were opportunities to recreate or even surpass Alexander's campaigns against the Achaemenids, now reincarnated as the Arsacid and Sasanian dynasties. In Iran, the early Islamic texts suggest that the Sasanians—and perhaps the Parthians too, though it is unclear whether the evidence goes back that far—saw the Romans in the west as both the successors of Alexander and answerable for the havoc he had wreaked upon their land. The memory of the king became a way to interpret interstate politics: as Alexander was to the ancient Persians, so now the Romans were to the Parthians and the Sasanians. When Persia and Rome clashed, they carried on a contest of great antiquity with roots that ran far deeper than their own eras.

The Limits of Analogy

Political ideology demands a coherent vision of how the world is supposed to look; grey areas and subtlety can dilute the force of clear narratives. In the politico-religious worldview that emerged in Iran under the Parthians and Sasanians, Alexander was an accursed foreign interloper whose invasion upset the cosmic order; in the conquest-centred realm of Roman imperial ideology, he was a leader who had blazed an eastern trail for future generations of military commanders. Rome took his place, while Parthia and the Sasanian kingdom took the place of his Persian enemies.

But the analogy only went so far. In both Rome and Iran, the legacy of Alexander was too multifaceted and too diverse to fit into any one historical narrative. In the literature of the late Republic and early Principate, some Roman observers were distinctly critical of the king's legacy and, by extension, of the project of eastern imperialism that it underpinned. And in the literature of Iran, one strand of the Alexander legend tried to create a place for the Macedonian in the roster of the great Persian kings. Where the Alexander

numismatic evidence to argue that the Sasanians responded to Roman propaganda. For the mobility of the stories contained in the various traditions of the Alexander Romance, see Daniel L. Selden, "Mapping the Alexander Romance", in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman et al. (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing, 2012).

historians of Rome expressed concern that the king had flirted with eastern despotism in his efforts to accommodate his Persian subjects, the Persians themselves embraced a story that made him one of them. These traditions coexisted with the Alexander analogy that the dynamics of Roman-Parthian and Roman-Sasanian relations had foregrounded—sometimes uneasily, and sometimes even within the confines of a single text.

In Rome, Alexander's example could sometimes be deployed to highlight the treacherous pitfalls of eastern imperialism rather than the glory that successful conquerors could earn. After the death of Publius Crassus (son of the triumvir Marcus Crassus) in battle against the Parthians at Carrhae in 53 BCE, Cicero lamented that the young man had been killed "while he was trying to be like Cyrus and Alexander."⁷⁵ The author blames Crassus' death on his desire to follow the wrong kind of *exempla*; the brash adventurism of the Persian and Macedonian conquerors is contrasted with the austere honour and sober wisdom of Crassus' ancestors, and his service in the Carrhae campaign is said to have resulted from "a fire of ambition unsuited to young men."⁷⁶ Moreover, Alexander is paired with Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Achaemenid Empire and, in this passage, Alexander's moral equivalent. For Cicero, the Macedonian provided no better an example than the Persian.

Such wariness of Alexander's military adventurism was shared by Lucius Annaeus Seneca, who wrote under the later Julio-Claudian emperors. In a letter to his correspondent Lucilius detailing the nature of Stoic virtue, Seneca inveighs against the greed and lack of self-restraint that great commanders tend to exhibit. Alexander illustrates his point perfectly:

Not sated with the ruin of the states so numerous which Philip had conquered or bought, he overthrows various others in various other places and bears arms around the whole world; nor yet does his cruelty, though tired, subside, like that of wild beasts who eat more than hunger demands. Now he joins many kingdoms into one kingdom, now the Greeks and the Persians fear the same man, now even the nations left free by Darius submit to the yoke.⁷⁷

75 Cic. *Brut.* 282: *dum Cyri et Alexandri similis esse voluit*. Cicero considered Publius a disciple: see Cic. *Q Fr.* 2.8.2.

76 Cic. *Brut.* 282: *hunc quoque absorbit aestus quidam insolitae adolescentibus gloriae*; cf. Henriette van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models: The Political Strategy of a Newcomer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 313–314.

77 Sen. *Epist.* 94.62–63: *Non contentus tot civitatum strage, quas aut vicerat Philippus aut emerat, alias alio loco proicit et toto orbe arma circumfert; nec subsistit usquam lassa*

Embedded in this moral discourse is a point of great consequence for Roman policy in the East.⁷⁸ Alexander is castigated for forging one kingdom from constituent parts that do not belong together; it is improper, in the author's view, for a single man to rule over both Greeks and Persians. This was no academic comment on an arid historical matter: for Seneca's contemporaries, the Parthians to the east ruled a resurrected version of the Persian Empire that Alexander had subjugated.⁷⁹ The implication for Roman leaders was plain: if Alexander had gone astray in adding Persian territory to his empire, then would-be conquerors of the East like Crassus, Caesar, and Antony had made the same mistake. Parthian territory constituted a part of the world that was better kept separate from Roman power; Rome's emperors followed in the Macedonian's footsteps at their own peril.

The idea reoccurs, in a still more vehement formulation, in the *Bellum Civile* of Seneca's nephew Lucan. As Caesar heads to Egypt, the land where Alexander was buried, the poet takes the opportunity to draw an implicit comparison between the Roman and Macedonian conquerors.⁸⁰ The deceased king is reviled as "the mad offspring of Pellaeon Philip", a "lucky plunderer", and "an evil fatal to the world."⁸¹ Lucan considers Alexander's limitless ambition to be a wicked transgression. "If liberty were ever to restore the world to itself", the poet laments, "Alexander would have been preserved for mockery—born to be a bad example to the world that so many lands could be under the sway of one man."⁸² As in Seneca's evaluation, the king is faulted for joining together disparate kingdoms into a single polity, a decision that stemmed from madness, impudence, and an unchecked lust for power and that rendered him "an archetype of tyranny and megalomania."⁸³

crudelitas inmanium ferarum modo quae plus quam exigit fames mordent. Iam in unum regnum multa regna coniecit, iam Graeci Persaeque eundem timent, iam etiam a Dareo liberae nationes iugum accipiunt.

78 Spencer (*The Roman Alexander*, 72–73) discusses the passage's commentary on the moral and philosophical education of a ruler.

79 See above, n. 51.

80 See Frederick Ahl, *Lucan: An Introduction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), 222–230; but cf. Nadja Kimmerle, *Lucan und der Prinzipat: Inkonsistenz und unzuverlässiges Erzählen in Bellum Civile* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), esp. 35–37, who has criticized the idea of a negative comparison between Alexander and Caesar.

81 Luc. 10.20: *Pellaei proles vaesana Philippi*; 10.21: *Felix praedo*; 10.34: *Terrarum fatale malum*.

82 Luc. 10.25–28: *nam sibi libertas unquam si redderet orbem | ludibrio servatus erat, non utile mundo | editus exemplum, terras tot posse sub uno | esse viro*. Cf. Juv. 10.168.

83 Jonathan Tracy, *Lucan's Egyptian Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 29.

How did such negative appraisals resonate during the late Republic and Principate? In contrast to treatments that tried to use Alexander to legitimize and promote eastern imperialism, traditions hostile to the Macedonian king implied that Romans who ventured east of the Euphrates were overstepping their bounds, projecting the empire's power into a region where it did not belong. Such a view could be difficult to reconcile with the political ideology of *imperium sine fine* (empire without limit), an attitude to conquest that was woven deep into the fabric of the empire.⁸⁴ All the same, one way of remembering Alexander emphasized that the king had gone, both geographically and morally, into places where the Romans were not supposed to follow.

In addition to more pedestrian despotic excesses—drunkenness, rapacity, megalomania—the negative Alexander tradition attributed a vice to the king that clashed dramatically with traditional Roman virtue: he was accused of going native, of succumbing to the Oriental degeneracy against which he had fought.⁸⁵ The charge had its basis in his adoption of Achaemenid aulic customs, including Persian dress, culinary habits, and especially ritual prostration (*proskynesis*).⁸⁶ Plutarch defended these measures as canny political leadership and Diodorus stressed their limited implementation, but the rest of the Alexander historians saw a degeneration into “the evil ways of foreign and conquered peoples.”⁸⁷ Other Roman commentators tended to follow the latter view, with the result that “the theme of Alexander’s moral decadence under the corrupting influence of the Orient became a veritable *topos* of Roman literature.”⁸⁸ In his meditation on the hypothetical outcome of a war between Alexander and the Romans, Livy opines that the Macedonian “would have come to Italy more like Darius than Alexander” because of his adoption of eastern customs.⁸⁹ There was a sense that, in conquering the Persians, Alexander had become one of them.

84 The phrase is from Verg. *Aen.* 1.279. On Roman attitudes toward imperial expansion, see William V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome, 327–70 BC* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1979) for the Republican period and C.R. Whittaker, *Rome and Its Frontiers: The Dynamics of Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 40–46 for the Principate.

85 For Roman views of Alexander’s drunkenness, see Spencer, *The Roman Alexander*, 86–97.

86 See A.B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 284–287.

87 Curt. 6.2.3: *peregrina et devictarum gentium mala*; cf. Arr. 4.7.4–5; Just. 12.3.8–11. On Curtius Rufus’ account, see further Baynham, *Unique History*, 169–171. Plutarch’s defense: *Mor.* 330b–c; cf. *Alex.* 45, 47. Diodorus’ disclaimer: 17.77.4–7.

88 Briant, *Darius in the Shadow of Alexander*, 203, with the discussion on 202–229.

89 Liv. 9.18.3: *Dareo magis similis quam Alexandro in Italiam venisset*.

On the Iranian side, one surviving tradition held that Alexander had not *become* a Persian; he had been *born* a Persian. According to this version of the legend, Alexander and his opponent Darius / Dārā were half-brothers, sons of the great Kayanian hero Dārāb. Alexander's mother was Nāhīd, the daughter of Philip—who, as mentioned above, was regarded in Iranian tradition as a Roman king. Philip gave Nāhīd to Dārāb as a wife. Dārāb, displeased with her malodorous breath, repudiated her and sent her back to Philip, though she was already pregnant with Alexander.⁹⁰ To cover the shame of her rejection by the Persian king, Philip claimed that he was the father, and in time named Alexander the crown prince of Rome. In the meantime, Dārāb took another wife, from whom Dārā was born a year or so after Alexander.⁹¹

This genealogy meant that Alexander could be, at one and the same time, a legitimate Kayanian king and a foreign Roman interloper. His figure in the *Šāh-nāma* is rife with tension between these two identities. Overall, Ferdowsi's portrait is positive: the king's beauty, wisdom, and temperance are emphasized throughout the narrative. In one scene, when Alexander visits Dārā in disguise, his half-brother observes that he is radiant with *farr*, the royal splendour that was the hallmark of Iranian kingship.⁹² When Dārā is attacked by two of his councillors, he dies in Alexander's arms after asking his rival to marry his daughter, to preserve Zoroastrianism, and to maintain Iranian festivals.⁹³ After Dārā's death, Alexander reassures his new Persian subjects that "Iran is the same now as it always was", and shortly afterwards he puts on the Kayanian crown.⁹⁴

In Ferdowsi's poem, these markers of Iranian kingship coexist with other assessments of Alexander as an interloper and an outsider. In a passage that shares many features with the *Letter of Tansar*, Alexander's final plans are said to have aimed at protecting Rome from foreign invasion. Aristotle advises him to leave Persia's nobility alive but disunited; "make the Kayanians into a

90 On Nāhīd's breath, see Manteghi, "Alexander the Great in the *Shāhnāmah*", 166; Rubanovich, "Why So Many Stories", 207–212.

91 This is the narrative in Ferdowsi (cf. Davis, *Shahnameh*, 452–455) and, with minor variations, Tarsusi (Gaillard, *Dārāb Nāmah*, 97–128). Tabari too knew this tradition (though he calls Alexander's mother Hali, not Nāhīd). But he also cites other genealogies, including one that held Alexander to be the son of Philip: see Tabari 696–697, 700–701 = Perlmann, *The History of Al-Tabarī*, vol. 4, 90–93.

92 Khaleghi-Motlagh, *Shahnameh*, vol. 5, 537, line 95 = Davis 2007, 459.

93 Khaleghi-Motlagh, *Shahnameh*, vol. 5, 557, lines 370–382 = Davis 2007, 466–470.

94 Khaleghi-Motlagh, *Shahnameh*, vol. 5, 561, line 414: همانست ایران که بود از نخست. Alexander crowned with the Kayanian crown: 565, line 458.

shield for your whole realm", he urges, "if you don't want an army to come against Rome."⁹⁵ In contrast to earlier passages, Alexander seems not to be a Kayanian himself here, and he is more concerned with the defence of Rome than the defence of Iran. Later in the poem, as Ferdowsi narrates the rise of the Sasanians, the dynasty's founder Ardeshir will inveigh against the wickedness of Alexander, who he claims "killed our ancestors one by one and unjustly took the world into his fist."⁹⁶ There is at this point no acknowledgement that, according to earlier passages, Alexander *was* one of Ardeshir's ancestors. Different traditions surrounding the Macedonian collided in the same text, and Ferdowsi evidently saw no need to reconcile them.⁹⁷

It is not easy to explain these discrepancies, for they strike at the heart of controversial questions about Ferdowsi's method and craft as a poet of the Iranian past. It may be that the text means to highlight Ardeshir's duplicitous rhetoric: the reader should notice that the Sasanian founder is reworking the past in order to justify his rebellion against the established political order, and that he is misrepresenting Alexander's lineage.⁹⁸ But some scholars take the view that inconsistencies in Ferdowsi stem from contradictions in his various sources, whether oral or written.⁹⁹ Faced with two or more different accounts of Alexander's heritage, perhaps the poet chose to transmit both versions, and to imbue his text with the uncertainty that he himself faced.

If Ferdowsi indeed encountered the positive Alexander in one of his sources, what accounts for the king's integration into the dynasties of ancient Iran? Scholars have offered several explanations.¹⁰⁰ One possibility is that the popularity of the Alexander Romance in the late Sasanian period forced a reconsideration of the king's legacy, softening attitudes to Alexander among the Iranian

95 Khaleghi-Motlagh and Omidshah, *Shahnameh*, vol. 6, 118, line 1740:

سپر کن کیان را همه پیش بوم چو خواهی که لشکر نیاید به روم; cf. Davis, *Shahnameh*, 523.

96 Khaleghi-Motlagh and Omidshah, *Shahnameh*, vol. 6, 157, line 352:

نیاگان ما را یکایک بکشت به پیدادی آورد گیتی به مش.

97 Cf. the discussion in Wiesehöfer, "Accursed and Adventurer."

98 See Dick Davis, *Epic and Sedition: The Case of Ferdowsi's Shāhnāmah* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1992), 17–18, who suggests that the arc of Ferdowsi's poem reveals a constant breakdown in Iranian loyalty towards the king, with Ardeshir's rebellion against Artabanus/Ardavan as one particularly egregious example.

99 See A. Shapur Shahbazi, *Ferdowsi: A Critical Biography* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1991), 132; Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, *The Emergence of Iranian Nationalism: Race and the Politics of Dislocation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 104: "the *Shāhnāmah* is a complex work reflecting multiple sources, rather than the expression of the personal convictions of a Ferdowsi, the zeitgeist of early Islamic Iran, or the timeless aspirations of all Iranians."

100 For a survey, see the discussion in Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians*, 303–307.

nobility and reconciling his reign with the national tradition.¹⁰¹ Another is that the pre-Islamic Alexander was fundamentally reworked in the centuries following the conquest of Iran by the Muslims, who considered him a leader of religious and moral virtue as well as worldly success.¹⁰²

But it is also possible that the “good” Alexander had deeper roots in pre-Islamic Iran. A recent suggestion by M. Rahim Shayegan traces the possible origins of this tradition back to the Arsacid period.¹⁰³ In Tacitus’ description of a letter written by Artabanus II, Shayegan notes, the Arsacid king justifies his territorial claims by way of reference to a double heritage: firstly, the Achaemenid empire founded by Cyrus the Great and, secondly, the Macedonian empire of Alexander.¹⁰⁴ If the Arsacids claimed both Persian *and* Hellenistic ancestry—as, for instance, their contemporaries in Commagene and Pontus seem to have done—then there may be some basis for a positive Iranian assessment of Alexander’s legacy long before the Sasanian or Islamic periods.¹⁰⁵ To be sure, this argument rests on uncertain foundations: as seen above in Cicero’s reproach of Publius Crassus, the pairing of Cyrus and Alexander was also a *topos* of Latin literature, and it is impossible to tell where Artabanus’ words end and Tacitus’ embroidery begins.¹⁰⁶ But recent work has shown that the Arsacids’ engagement with the culture and ruling strategies of the Hellenistic kingdoms, though

101 On the fraught question of a Middle Persian version of the Alexander Romance, see above, n. 29.

102 See Zuwiyya, “The Alexander Romance in the Arabic Tradition”; Rubanovich, “Why So Many Stories”, 212–232. For interpretations of the positive Iranian Alexander as a production of the Islamic period, see Boyce and Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, 60 n. 40; A. Abel, “La figure d’Alexandre en Iran”, in *Atti del Convegno sul tema: La Persia e il mondo Greco-Romano: Roma, 11–14 aprile 1965* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1966), 119–134.

103 Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians*, 293–311.

104 Tac. *Ann.* 6.31.1; see above, n. 25, 55.

105 On the double inheritance of the Commagenian dynasty, see the inscription of Antiochus I at Nemrud Dağı (*OGIS* 383) with the discussions in Margherita Facella, “Φιλορῶμαχος καὶ Φιλέλλην: Roman Perceptions of Commagenian Royalty”, in *Imaginary Kings: Royal Images in the Ancient Near East, Greece and Rome*, ed. Richard Fowler and Olivier Hekster (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2005), 87–103; and Richard Fowler, “‘Most Fortunate Roots’: Tradition and Legitimacy in Parthian Royal Ideology”, in *Imaginary Kings: Royal Images in the Ancient Near East, Greece and Rome*, ed. Richard Fowler and Olivier Hekster (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2005), 127–128. For the ancestry of the Pontic king Mithradates VI Eupator, see Facella, “Roman Perceptions”, 88 and n. 13; Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians*, 307–311.

106 Cic. *Brut.* 282; see above, p. 216.

sometimes overstated, was far from superficial.¹⁰⁷ The possibility exists, therefore, that positive evaluations of Alexander's legacy had a long and complicated history on the Iranian plateau, competing with and in some contexts superseding the negative image of the ruler that Zoroastrian texts preserved.

Conclusion

As the empires of Iran and Rome settled into a long and complex period of imperial contestation and coexistence, the memory of Alexander the Great supplied an ancient precedent for contemporary political developments. In some respects, the Macedonian's invasion of the Achaemenid Empire set the stage for the Roman-Persian relationship, which took the form of an east-west rivalry between the imitators of Alexander and the descendants of his opponent Dārā. For Roman commanders and the authors who recorded their exploits, Alexander's example provided a reference point with which Roman accomplishments in the East could be measured, compared, and contrasted; for the Sasanians (and perhaps the Arsacids too, though the evidence for their period is far more tenuous), the campaigns against Rome in the west might be justified as a fight to avenge the Kayanian dynasty that the "Roman" Alexander had destroyed.

To be sure, Alexander's legacy operated differently in Iranian and Roman traditions, because the two sides had different conceptions of history. The Parthians and Sasanians seem to have assigned Alexander the Roman identity of their contemporary rivals, mapping the circumstances of the present back onto the past. The Romans, on the other hand, called their eastern foes Medes, Persians, and Achaemenids—borrowing terms from older Greek literature on the Achaemenids to describe their enemies in the present. In this sense, Iranians used the present to describe the past, and the Romans the past to describe the present. In both cases, though, the international arena was interpreted by means of an historical analogy: the Romans took Alexander's place, and the Parthians and Sasanians assumed the mantle of his enemies.

107 See Josef Wiesehöfer, "‘Denn Orodes war der griechischen Sprache und Literatur nicht unkundig’. Parther, Griechen und griechische Kultur", in *Variatio delectat. Iran und der Westen. Gedenkschrift für Peter Calmeyer*, ed. Reinhard Dittmann (Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2000), 703–721; Marek Olbrycht, "Parthians, Greek Culture, and Beyond", in *Within the Circle of Ancient Ideas and Virtues: Studies in Honour of Professor Maria Dzielska*, ed. Kamilla Twardowska et al. (Krakow: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze "Historia Iagellonica", 2014), 129–142.

But even as this analogy helped commentators in both Rome and Iran to explain the historical foundations of the relationship between the two empires, it coexisted and clashed with alternate visions of what Alexander's career had meant. One version of the Alexander legend in Iran turned him into a legitimate Kayanian and a devout Zoroastrian—the same dynasty and religion that other texts insist he tried to destroy. And in Rome, the negative evaluation of Alexander by historians, philosophers, rhetoricians, and poets could cast doubt on the project of bringing Persia and its subject peoples into Roman imperial space, mounting a challenge to the ideology of expansion that was otherwise deeply entrenched among ruling elites.

In a word, then, the reception of Alexander in Persia and in Rome demonstrated to both sides that their conflicts and antagonisms had deep roots in the ancient past. In their own ways, residents of both empires used their histories of Alexander to explain why the ancient world had been divided between them, and to articulate how that division reflected tensions that were bigger, and ran deeper, than their own era. But the memory of the Macedonian was never static or uncontested, and his kingship would always be variously assessed. Alexander was one way that the Iranians and Romans thought through and interpreted their relationship to one another, but there was always more than one way to read his story.

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Beyond Persianization: The Adoption of Near Eastern Traditions by Alexander the Great

James Mullen

Throughout his conquest of the Achaemenid Empire Alexander found himself forced to engage with various Near Eastern peoples beyond the battlefield, socially and culturally, in order to rule his vast new empire. In this paper I challenge the constraints imposed on our perception of Alexander's engagement with his new subjects, and how this was received by them, by the tendency in modern scholarship to reduce these activities to consideration of the Persian nobility under the heading "Persianization." The empire of the Persian Achaemenids was a vast heterogeneous entity in which local traditions were maintained and ethnic identities used to divide spheres of imperial administration. By highlighting the variety of cultural expectations within the Achaemenid Empire, I will demonstrate the need to consider Alexander's "Persianization" only in respect of his engagement with Persians.

The reception of Alexander is a theme in which the conqueror is uncharacteristically passive. The point has been well made that the Alexander we receive in Diodorus, Rufus, Arrian, Plutarch and Justin is primarily a construct of these authors writing centuries after Alexander's death, reflecting not just their contemporary concerns, but also their reliance upon equally partisan historiographic traditions of representing Alexander. Even the passages identified as eyewitness accounts must reflect the agenda of those writing and come to us through filters of fragments and *testimonia* in writers of the Roman period.¹

1 On the historians of Alexander: L. Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (Chico, Cal.: Scholars Press, 1983); A.B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander* I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 1–41; *From Arrian to Alexander: Studies in Historical Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); *Alexander and the East: The Tragedy of Triumph* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 31–65; N.G.L. Hammond, *Sources for Alexander the Great: an Analysis of Plutarch's Life and Arrian's Anabasis Alexandrou* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); D. Lenfant, "On Persian *tryphe* in Athenaeus" in *Persian Responses: Political and Cultural Interactions with(in) the Achaemenid Empire* ed. C. Tuplin (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2007), 51–57 raises the same issues in respect of Athenaeus, whose *Deipnosophists* provides a number of fragments relating to Alexander. A.J.S. Spawforth, "The

Not only is Alexander received in historiography, but his image has similarly been used to suit a multitude of needs throughout history.² A key aspect of this paper is the steps taken by Alexander to engage with local populations that he might be received positively in his own lifetime.

The surviving sources agree that Alexander adopted certain eastern customs including costume and court protocol.³ Although they do not agree on the details of Alexander's new court style, the dominant features they record are: the adoption of clothing that was recognizably that of the Persian kings,⁴ the introduction of certain rituals from the court of the Persian kings, especially the practice of doing obeisance before the king, and distributing cloaks of purple and gold to his closest companions. We can be confident these are genuine features of Fourth Century Persian royal dress as they appear in Xenophon's account of the costume and ceremony adopted by Cyrus the Great.⁵

Further examples of Alexander adopting eastern practices and personnel are raised throughout the Alexander histories, most notably in the complaints of Cleitus at Marakanda, at the Opis Mutiny and the mass marriages at Susa, but it is in the passages included in the Appendix below that the ancient sources

Court of Alexander the Great Between Europe and Asia" in *The Court and Court Society in Ancient Monarchies* ed. A.J.S. Spawforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 88–89 on the issue of the Roman Alexander; and "The Pamphleteer Ehippus, King Alexander and the Persian Royal Hunt", *Histos* 6 (2012): 177–180 has discussed not only the acknowledged invective in one of Athenaeus' sources, Ehippus, but the further difficulty inherent in contemporary accounts of Alexander which is the issue of proximity to the king and knowledge of his intentions within the royal court.

- 2 See for example M. Lianou, "The Role of the Argeadai in the Legitimation of the Ptolemaic Dynasty" in *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives* eds. E. Carney and D. Ogden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 123–133 and A. Stewart, *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 69, 225, 240, 264, 270–274; P. Briant, "Chasses Royales Macédoniennes et chasses Royales Perses: le thème de la chasse au lion sur la chasse de Vergina" *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* 17 (1991): 222–223 on the use of Alexander to legitimate kingdoms of Diadochi.
- 3 Arr. *Anab.* 4.7.3–7, 8.2, 10.5–12.5, 14.1–2; Plut. *Alex.* 45; *De Alex. fort.* 329f–330a; Diod. Sic. 17.77.4–6; Curt. 6.6.1–7; Just. *Epit.* 12.3.8–12.
- 4 In this I include the adoption of Achaemenid royal headgear. Plutarch says nothing specifically about headgear; Diodorus, Curtius Rufus and Justin all concur that Alexander adopted the diadem, to which we may add Ehippus FGrH 126 F5 = Ath. 12.537e; Arr. *Anab.* 4.7.4 states that Alexander "exchanged the tiara (τῆν κίτριν) of the Persians ... for the head-dress he had long worn", but it is generally accepted that this is an error and he only ever used the diadem, A.B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander* II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 50.
- 5 Xen. *Cyr.* 8.3.1–3, 13–16, 21–23; cf. Curt. 3.3.17–20.

turn their full attention to the new eastern flavour of Alexander's court.⁶ In the modern scholarship, this process of engaging with native customs by introducing features of native royal costume and ceremonial, and incorporating local elites into his own royal court, is often approached under terms deriving from "the Orient," or as "Persianization",⁷ both of which come with a degree of baggage which can distort attempts at analysis.

6 Arr. *Anab.* 4.8.1–9.9; Curt. 8.1.19–2.13; Just. *Epit.* 12.6.1–18 and Plut. *Alex.* 50–52.4 record the death of Cleitus at Marakanda and are discussed by E. Carney, "The Death of Clitus" *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 22 (1981): 153–155. Only Plutarch has Cleitus reiterate the adoption of Persian personnel and court ceremonial among the grievances of the Macedonians. The mass marriage at Susa appear at Diod. Sic. 17.107.6; Curt. 10.3.11–12; Plut. *Alex.* 70.2; Plut. *De Alex. fort.* 329d–e; Just. *Epit.* 12.10.9–10; only Arr. *Anab.* 7.4.4–8 describes them as being made according to Persian custom; see E. Carney, "Alexander and Persian Women" *The American Journal of Philology* 117 (1996): 563–583. Mutiny at Opis: Arr. *Anab.* 7.6.1–5, 8.2–3, 11.1–9; Curt. 10.2.12, 23, 3.5–14; Diod. 17.109.3; Plut. *Alex.* 71.4; Just. *Epit.* 12.12.1–6. A.B. Bosworth, "Alexander and the Iranians" *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100 (1980): 1–21 assesses the significance of these events and stresses that the adoption of Persian personnel and protocol was extensive. On the Persian custom of feasting in concentric circles see Spawforth, "The Court of Alexander", 103 and compared with further accounts of Persian court custom by P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*, trans. P.T. Daniels (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 247.

7 The terms are used for example by P. Cartledge, *Alexander the Great: The Hunt for a New Past* (London: Pan Macmillan Ltd, 2004), 122–123 describes it as the "orientalist policy", "orientalising policy" and at 173–174 repeatedly uses "oriental" to describe Alexander's new subjects and his new costume as part of his "imperial pageantry". Peter Green, *Alexander of Macedon, 356–323 BC: A Historical Biography* (London: University of California Press, 1991), 333 refers to "ever-increasing orientalization". "Persianisation" is used, albeit most often in scare quotes, by Maria Brosius, "Alexander and the Persians" in *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great*, ed. Joseph Roisman (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 176; Spawforth, "The Pamphleteer Ehippus"; E.M. Anson, "Why Study Ancient Macedonia and What this *Companion* is About" in *A Companion to Ancient Macedonia* eds. J. Roisman and Ian Worthington (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2010), 4; and features in the Newcastle University second year undergraduate module "In Alexander's Footsteps: Classical and Hellenistic Empires". It is of course easy to identify examples for the use of a term in a range of works and present it out of context as evidence of universal application. It must therefore be stressed that this is a small sample of Alexander scholarship and although these terms are used, there are further studies in which they are not and even in the examples given these terms can be further hedged around with clarifying statements.

Orientalizing

The issues with using terms such as “oriental” and “orientalizing” in the 7th Century BC to describe the interactions between Greeks and their Near Eastern neighbours, evidenced in art, have been thoroughly argued by Ann Gunter and those concerns remain valid for the 6–4th centuries BC.⁸ Oriental has in the past been applied pejoratively, creating two fundamentally opposed monoliths: East and West, Europe and Asia, Us and Them.⁹

Widespread critical recognition of this conception of the Orient in historiography goes back to Edward Said's *Orientalism* presenting the Orient since antiquity as “almost a European invention” of the Orient, as the antithesis of the Occident, in order to justify European colonial relationships of domination over the East.¹⁰ As such, the Orient, according to Said, has consistently been defined by Orientalists in terms of despotism, cruelty, depravity, degradation, licentiousness and dishonesty. In those terms, for a Westerner to Orientalize, or “go native,” would bear moral censure as he would be adopting the aberrant practices that either made, or were symptomatic of, the Orient's natural political, cultural and moral subordination.

Said's *Orientalism* has been the subject of sharp criticism since its publication in 1978 from various disciplines on numerous grounds, including highly selective use of sources and his own reduction of the Orient and Orientalism to the Islamic Arab experience of an equally monolithically conceived 18th Century Europe.¹¹ Although Said's concept of Orientalism is no longer widely accepted, even his critics acknowledge that racist and ethnocentrist represen-

8 A. Gunter, “Models of the Orient in the Art of the Orientalizing Period” in *Achaemenid History v: the Roots of the European Tradition, Proceedings of the 1987 Groningen Achaemenid History Workshop* eds. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and J.W. Drijvers (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1990), 132–137; *Greek Art and the Orient* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1–13; “Orientalism and Orientalization in the Iron Age Mediterranean” in *Critical Approaches to Ancient Near Eastern Art* eds. B.A. Brown and M.H. Feldman (Boston/Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 82–96.

9 See C. von Rüden, “Beyond the East-West Dichotomy in Syrian and Levantine Wall Paintings” in *Critical Approaches to Ancient Near Eastern Art* eds. B.A. Brown and M.H. Feldman (Boston/Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 61–63 for an excellent summary of early twentieth century positions regarding the sharp contrasts between East and West.

10 E.W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), 1–7.

11 For a highly detailed critical analysis of Said's Orientalism with substantial bibliography see the recent new edition of D.M. Varrisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (Seattle Wash.; London: University of Washington Press, 2017), Kindle Edition.

tations of the Orient have been produced in all media as a foil to the Occident over the centuries.¹² The apogee of such imagery of the Orient is perhaps found in the 2006 film, *300*, which greatly expands upon the themes of Oriental excess and spectacular wealth, where strange and mythical creatures exist and serve the king and every vice is ready to be indulged, as also depicted in Frank Miller's graphic novel, *300* (1998).¹³ Nor is the use of Orientalism as a means of justifying economic hegemony in the East entirely extinct: in the preface to the 2003 edition of *Orientalism*, Said condemns what he perceives as the justification for interventionism in the Middle East provided by academics, Orientalists in his terms; furthermore, in 2014, at a BIPS seminar, staff from the American embassy recommended I apply to "big oil" for funding of my PhD.¹⁴ The rationale being that they may support study of Eastern culture and society in order to appear less overtly invasive.

It is important to recognize that the perception of the Orient in these terms was already available for deployment in the fourth century BC. Gunter sees signs of a nascent Orientalism in pre-Classical Greek history in Homer's depiction of various non-Greek peoples.¹⁵ However the Homeric epics may have come to be used to define "Greek" from "Oriental", the consensus is to see the epics in the terms of Irad Malkin, whereby "the polytheistic and polyheric nature of Greek religion ... allowed for a comprehensive perception of humanity, contrary to the idea of an Absolute Other or Savages. What we call 'Greek heroes' were not Greek but simply heroes."¹⁶ A fundamental division between Greeks and Orientals, in this case Persians, appears in Aeschylus' *Persae*. The play is considered by Said as articulating this division whereby the Orient is intensely seductive and simultaneously destructive, where rationality is undermined by

12 Varrisco, *Reading Orientalism*, Introduction 1; at 111 he embarks on an analysis of the deliberate use of paintings by Jean-Leon Gérôme as cover illustrations for *Orientalism* as unspoken reinforcement of the presentation of the Orient as a centre of depravity. It is clear that Orientalism could be used to create images of the imagined sordid East.

13 F. Miller and L. Varley, *300* (Milwaukie: Dark Horse Comics Inc, 1998) issue 5.

14 Said, *Orientalism*, xiii–xvi.

15 Gunter, *Art and the Orient*, 1; likewise, P. Georges, *Barbarian Asia and the Greek Experience: From the Archaic Period to the Age of Xenophon* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 14 sees the origins of an Eastern stereotype of Persians as luxurious and effeminate in the *Iliad*.

16 I. Malkin, "Greek ambiguities: 'Ancient Hellas' and 'Barbarian Epirus'" in *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity* ed. I. Malkin (Washington D.C.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 201. See also P. Cartledge, *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 38.

excess.¹⁷ The significance of the play in terms of Orientalism is expanded by Edith Hall who follows Said on this issue, highlighting the antithesis created between Hellene and Persian, considering it to be “the first unmistakable file in the archive of Orientalism, the discourse by which the European imagination has dominated Asia ever since by conceptualizing its inhabitants as defeated, luxurious, emotional, cruel, and always as dangerous.”¹⁸ This motif of the Oriental as fundamentally inferior to the Greek recurs throughout the fifth century. One example in Herodotus appears when Aristagoras, tyrant of Miletus, rhetorically highlights the clear superiority of the Greeks over the Eastern barbarians; victory will be easy οὔτε γὰρ οἱ βάρβαροι ἄλκιμοι εἰσὶ Asia is a land of fantastic wealth, but the bravery, armament and costume of the barbarians are inferior to that of Greeks.¹⁹

Although Orientalism in Said’s sense clearly did exist, we should be wary of treating it as a monolithic doctrine applied in every case by every Greek writing about non-Greeks.²⁰ It was however, certainly a fully developed *topos* in the Fourth Century. Ctesias engages wholeheartedly in such Orientalism, extending effeminacy and excess without restraint to all Oriental monarchies, even those predating the Persians.²¹ The epilogue to Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* estab-

17 Said, *Orientalism*, 57.

18 E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition Through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 99–100.

19 Hdt. 5.49.

20 See C. Pelling “East is East and West is West—or are they? National Stereotypes in Herodotus” *Histos* 1 (1997): 63–64 who compares the clear Orientalism of the Aristagoras passage above with Hdt. 9.62–63 where the Persians at Plataea are clearly “other” by their costume, but not inferior to the Greeks by nature.

21 Ctesias, “Persica” F1b in *Ctesias’ History of Persia: Tales from the Orient*. L. Llewellyn-Jones and J. Robson (London: Routledge, 2010), 131. The fragment is found in Diod. Sic. 2.21.2–7. Ctesias is generally regarded as providing unreliable and sensationalist material, but see H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg “The Fifth Oriental Monarchy and Hellenocentrism: *Cyropaedia* VIII viii and its influence” in *Achaemenid History 11: The Greek Sources. Proceedings of the Groningen 1984 Achaemenid History Workshop* eds. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1987), 118–121 suggesting that these features preserve the Greek perception of Persia; and G.B. Lanfranchi “Greek Historians and the Memory of the Assyrian Court” in *Der Achämenidhof / The Achaemenid Court: Akten des 2. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema—Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen—Landgut Castelen bei Basel*, 23–25. Mai 2007 ed. R. Jacobs and R. Rollinger (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2010), 39–60 argues that Ctesias’ projection of Orientalism to the distant past may reflect genuine features of contemporary Achaemenid court life.

lishes contemporary barbarians as wicked, impious, gluttonous, weak, luxurious and effeminate, abandoning ancient custom, giving themselves over to excess and relying on Greek soldiers in war.²² Isocrates exhorts Alexander's father, Philip to invade Asia, citing the same Orientalist motifs of Greek superiority over the East and Aristotle articulates perceived differences in the natures of barbarians and Greeks which allow the former to be considered naturally fit to be slaves.²³

It therefore should come as no surprise that the general consensus among Alexander histories is to present the introduction of Near Eastern customs as the corruption and degeneration of Alexander.²⁴ For them, our term orientalizing would be synonymous with barbarization. Plutarch describes the costume as "barbarian dress", Arrian remarks that he does not approve of it, and Curtius Rufus sees the adopted practices as "corrupted by luxury and foreign customs".²⁵

Orientalizing then naturally falls into the same moralizing framework established by Orientalism and the Alexander historians. An equally fundamental problem with approaching developments in Alexander's court under the heading of orientalizing is that it fails to recognize the intensive cultural and ethnic diversity of the ancient Near East.²⁶ The traditions of the Near East cannot simply be bundled together under the heading "Oriental". Likewise, the adoption of local customs by Alexander should not be generalized as orientalizing, which

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- 22 Xen. *Cyr.* 8.8.4 ff. This characterization of contemporary Persians is specifically contrasted with the overwhelmingly positive depiction of Cyrus throughout the *Cyropaedia*. In the current argument it is not necessary to consider whether the epilogue is a later addition to Xenophon's original text.
 - 23 Isoc. *Philip* 90–92; Arist. *Pol.* 1284a15 ff. cf. 1285a15–30 whereby a form of kingship over barbarians resembles tyranny, but is according to law because the barbarians are more servile in their nature than Greeks.
 - 24 Unacceptable subversion of clearly superior Hellenic practices: S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: language, Classicism and Power in the Greek World AD 50–250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 17.
 - 25 Plut. *Alex.* 45.1–3; Arr. *Anab.* 4.7.4; Curt. 6.6.1–10. Interestingly, Curt. 10.3.6–10 repeats the motif of the Oriental luxury and excess, but places it in an address by Alexander to his foreign troops at Opis.
 - 26 See A. Kuhrt and H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Introduction" in *Achaemenid History VI: Asia Minor and Egypt: Old Cultures in a New Empire. Proceedings of the Groningen 1988 Achaemenid History Workshop* eds. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1991): xiii–xv; and the comment of Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 77 that there is "nothing to suggest a priori that the Persian conquest had the same impact on every country."

ultimately boils down to a meaning of nothing more than non-European. It offers no helpful insights to identifying what Alexander was trying to achieve by introducing new elements to his court or how it might have been received by his new subjects.

Persianization

That Alexander had genuine objectives in mind for the adoption of certain elements of costume and ceremonial is suggested by Plutarch and Arrian.²⁷ Each indicates that the introduction of new practices was a deliberate policy of Alexander's intended to align himself more closely with the political and cultural traditions of his native subjects in an ancient campaign to win hearts and minds and so reduce the risk of rebellion.²⁸

Arrian and Plutarch do not state that this policy was directed at the Persians, using the phrases "barbarians" and "Asians" respectively, but it is implied that Persians were the target group. In the case of Plutarch, the discussion is situated in Hyrcania, and in the case of Arrian, this "device designed for the barbarians" is surrounded by direct references to "Persian dress," "Persian apple-bearers" and "Persian peers". Having concluded that orientalizing carries too many implications of moralizing distinctions between East and West to appropriately be used as a term for Alexander's actions, and that the Alexander historians considered those actions to be directed towards the Persians, we must examine the suitability of the term Persianization.

The first potential problem with Persianization is how easily this term can be used synonymously with orientalizing, where Persia comes to stand not only for the entire empire, but for the entire Near East. To avoid this potential difficulty this paper prefers to identify the empire as that of the Achaemenids. In the Persian sources Persia, and the Persians, are one of many distinct regions and peoples within the empire. The inscription on the tomb of Darius I at Naqš-

27 Plut. *Alex.* 45.1; Arr. *Anab.* 7.29.3–4.

28 Harmony and unity most fully developed in Plut. *Alex.* 45.1; 47.3–7; *de. Alex. fort.* 329b–330e. The 20th Century development of scholarly opinion regarding *homonoia*, "brotherhood of man" and "unity of mankind" is well established. An overly simplified summary of the key developments are: promotion of "brotherhood and unity" by W.W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* 11 (Cambridge: University Press, 1948), 400–403, 409–449; this view was then persuasively challenged by E. Badian, "Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind" *Historia* 7 (1958): 425–444; and Bosworth, "Alexander and the Iranians" put the nails into the coffin of unity of mankind.

i Rustam lists the achievements of Darius and states:

By the favour of Auramazda
these are the countries which I seized
outside of Persia [emphasis added] ...
Media, Elam, Parthia, Aria,
Bactria, Sogdiana, Chorasmia,
Drangiana, Arachosia, Sattagydia,
Gandara, Sind, Amyrgian Scythians,
Scythians with pointed caps, Babylonia,
Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, Armenia,
Cappadocia, Sardis, Ionia, Scythians across
the sea, Skudra, petasos wearing Ionians, Libyans,
Ethiopians, men of Maka, Carians.²⁹

The inscription continues:

If now thou shalt think “how many are the countries which King Darius held?” look at the sculptures who bear the throne, then shalt thou know, then shall it become known to thee: the spear of a Persian man has gone forth far; then shall it become known to thee: a Persian man has delivered battle *far indeed from Persia* [emphasis added].³⁰

The accompanying relief sculptures include individually identifiable and labelled figures representing each of the lands ruled by Darius. The importance of this when assessing Persianization on the part of Alexander, or anyone else, is that Persia is presented as a distinct geographical entity from which the Persian

29 DNā §16–18 ... 22–30. The translation is that of R.G. Kent, *Old Persian: Grammar, Texts, Lexicon* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1953). A more recent translation is produced by A. Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), 11, no. 16 which includes only minor variations. The petasos wearing Ionians (OP *Yauna takabarā*) of DNā and DSm §10–11 cf. DSe §27–29 are identified by J.M. Balcer, “Persian Occupied Thrace (Skudra)” *Historia* 37 (1988), 7 as Macedonians. N.G.L. Hammond, *The Macedonian State: The Origins, Institutions and History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 13 follows Balcer in identifying this group as Macedonian, but prefers to identify them as Ionians wearing the kausia. On the kausia in Macedon see E.A. Fredricksmeyer, “Alexander the Great and the Macedonian kausia”, *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 116 (1986), 215–227 contra B.M. Kingsley “The Cap that Survived Alexander” *American Journal of Archaeology* 85 (1981), 39–46.

30 DNā §38–47.

man has gone forth and appears alongside the other regions and peoples ruled. Persia therefore cannot stand in for the empire or the Near East as a whole.

Door-jambs at Persepolis are decorated with a condensed throne-bearer motif and the base of the statue of Darius from Susa is decorated with an adaptation of this motif with labels in Egyptian hieroglyphics to help identify the different peoples.³¹ That the empire consisted of many different peoples was clearly acknowledged and actively advertised by the Persian kings. Classical authors recognized this key organizing principle of the Achaemenid Empire, especially when mobilizing manpower, according to ethnic groups who maintained their own languages and customs. Aristotle describes the empire in these terms: τὴν δὲ σύμπασαν ἀρχὴν τῆς Ἀσίας, περατουμένην Ἑλλησπόντῳ μὲν ἐκ τῶν πρὸς ἐσπέραν μερῶν, Ἰνδῶ δὲ ἐκ τῶν πρὸς ἕω, διειλήφεσαν κατὰ ἔθνη στρατηγοὶ καὶ σατράπαι καὶ βασιλεῖς, δοῦλοι τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως.³²

There are two minor issues which must be borne in mind when proceeding on the basis that Persia was a distinct and reasonably homogeneous entity within the empire: one is the identification by Darius and Xerxes in inscriptions not just as Persians, but also as Aryans.³³ Aryan (Iranian) incorporates various groups across the imperial heartland speaking dialects of Old Iranian and sharing a broad culture.³⁴ Persians, though distinct, also existed as part of a broader ethnic group with which they shared certain customs. The second is the identification of Cyrus in his own inscription on the Cyrus Cylinder as king of Anšan rather than of Persia.³⁵ Fortunately, this issue does not present

31 South door-jambs of the hundred column hall: M.C. Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art: Essays in the Creation of an Iconography of Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 107–108; Darius Statue: J. Yoyotte, “The Egyptian Statue of Darius” in *The Palace of Darius at Susa: The Great Royal Residence of Achaemenid Persia* ed. J. Perrot with an Introduction by John Curtis (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2013): 241–271.

32 Ps.-Aristotle, *De Mundo* 398a27–31; Hdt. 7.44, 61–80, 83–87, 89–96; Diod. Sic. 7.96; 17.58.1; Curt. 3.9.5; Briant, *Cyrus to Alexander*, 410, 495.

33 DB IV § 70 Aryan appears as a language; DNa § 8–15 (also reminds that Darius is “king of countries containing all kinds of men”); DSe § 12–14; XPh § 11–14 (Daiva Inscription).

34 For definitions of Iranians and their distribution across modern Iran see Kent, *Old Persian*, 6; R.N. Frye, “Iranian Identity in Ancient Times” *Iranian Studies* 26 (1993): 143–146; and J. Wiesehöfer, “The Achaemenid Empire” in *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium* eds. I. Morris and W. Scheidel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 70.

35 Cyrus Cylinder § 12. After this introduction Cyrus uses the traditional Babylonian royal titles “king of the universe, great king, powerful king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters” but identifies his paternal line back three generations as kings of Anšan (§ 20–21). Translation: I. Finkel, “The Cyrus Cylinder: The Babylonian

a serious problem when assessing the actions of Alexander as no Persian king after Cyrus seems to have used this title.³⁶ However, it would not do to just ignore the fact that Cyrus would use this as a title since Anšan was one of the capitals of the ancient Elamite kingdom and, most significantly, was neither Persian nor Iranian.³⁷

These two issues aside, we are left with the simple position that the term Persianization should refer exclusively to Alexander's adoption of court customs that were specifically Persian. Only the first issue, regarding Persians as Iranians might undermine this position, but the fact that no king after Xerxes declares himself to be Iranian in addition to being Persian means it should not be given too much weight. Of far greater concern is the question of why it is that under this criterion for Persianization that Alexander apparently took no steps to appeal to the traditions of any of the other peoples in his new empire for support or to prevent rebellion.

It is possible that the term "Persianization" is concealing a more complex set of interactions between Alexander and the various groups within the empire. It creates a very real danger of circular reasoning whereby, because we have determined that Alexander Persianized, it follows that his adoption of distinctly non-European elements at court must be derived from Persian tradition and be directed towards a Persian audience.

We see precisely this error in Arrian when describing Alexander's last days at Babylon when a prisoner sat upon the throne. He states the individual was not dragged off the throne due to some νόμον Περσικόν.³⁸ The event closely conforms to the ancient Mesopotamian tradition of the substitute king (*šar puḫi*) where evil omens meant for the king are directed instead onto a substitute who takes the king's place for a period of time.³⁹ The closest parallel to this tradition

Perspective" in *The Cyrus Cylinder* ed. I. Finkel (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd. 2013), 4–7; transliteration: I. Finkel, "Transliteration of the Cyrus Cylinder Text" in *The Cyrus Cylinder* ed. I. Finkel (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd. 2013), 130–133.

36 The title drops out of royal usage, but Cyrus of Anšan, son of Teispes continued to feature in Achaemenid royal circles, used on PFS 93*: Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire*, 3, no. 3. See M.B. Garrison, "Seals and the Elite at Persepolis: Some Observations on Early Achaemenid Persian Art" *Ars Orientalis* 21 (1991), 3–7.

37 Note Frye "Iranian Identity", 143–146 on possible assimilation of Elamites into Iranian/Persian identity after destruction by Assyria.

38 Arr. *Anab.* 7.24.2–3; cf. Diod. Sic. 17.116.2–4; Plut. *Alex.* 73–74.

39 On the substitute king see J. Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning and the Gods* trans. Z. Bahrani and M. Van De Mieroop (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 138–155 = *Akkadica* 9 (1978): 2–24. Examples in royal correspondence: D.J. Wiseman, "The Nimrud Tablets 1953" *Iraq* 15 (1953), 137, 148.

in a Persian context is the story preserved in Herodotus that Xerxes sought to trick a dream vision by having the noble Artabanus dress in the royal robe, sit on the throne and sleep in the king's bed.⁴⁰ Arrian then appears to be mistakenly attributing a Babylonian custom to the Persians.

Although this anecdote highlights a problem with the term Persianization, it is not in itself direct evidence for Alexander adopting practices from peoples of his empire other than Persians. Alexander seems to have been unaware that this ritual existed and was being undertaken after he entered Babylon. He was concerned that the man's action may have been part of a plot against him.⁴¹ What this incident does highlight is that local traditions relating to royalty persisted throughout the period of Persian rule in the Near East and that Alexander was being received in these traditional terms.⁴²

As seen above, the key elements of costume and court ceremonial the historians record Alexander adopting are likely to be genuinely Persian elements. Those sources who place the court developments chronologically agree that Alexander introduced them at the Parthia-Hyrcania border around the time he received news that Bessus had declared himself the new Achaemenid king.⁴³ As a result, it is generally agreed that, regardless of whether or not it was successful, these developments were calculated to appeal to the Persian nobility, in their own terms, that Alexander was the new Great King.⁴⁴

The extent of this process has generated considerable debate on whether Alexander might legitimately be styled the last of the Achaemenids. On the one hand, Pierre Briant argues that during Alexander's lifetime the institutions

40 Hdt. 7.12–19.

41 Arr. *Anab.* 7.24.3.

42 A. Kuhrt, "Alexander and Babylon" in *Achaemenid History v: the Roots of the European Tradition, Proceedings of the 1987 Groningen Achaemenid History Workshop* eds. Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg and J.W. Drijvers (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1990), 121–128 discusses the literal reception of Alexander into Babylon in 331 BC arguing that this was negotiated according to traditional Babylonian precedent rather than any Persian custom.

43 Curt. 6.5.22–6.1; Plut. *Alex.* 45; Diod. Sic. 17.77; Just. *Epit.* 12.3. Bosworth, "Alexander and the Iranians", 5–6 places the adoption of costume and ceremonial after the death of Darius in response to Bessus' usurpation. Spawforth, "The Court of Alexander", 93–107 indicates a more gradual development towards an Achaemenid-style court before the overt adoption of costume and ceremonial in 330 BC.

44 A.B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 98–100; "Alexander and the Iranians", 6 specifically identifies the developments as an attempt to be demonstrate that he was genuinely the Achaemenid King of Kings.

of the Persian empire which maintained imperial cohesion remained, albeit under considerable stress;⁴⁵ on the other, there are those who argue that Alexander's Persianization was a façade and that the basis of Achaemenid rule, the key institutions maintaining the bonds between Persian king the Persian nobility that actually allowed the empire to function, were destroyed by Alexander.⁴⁶

The latter point out that the title he is recorded as employing, "king of Asia", has no Near Eastern precedent; Persian kings preferring "king", "great king", "king of kings", "king of countries", and alternative traditions providing for "king of Akkad" or "king of the universe"; they highlight the apparent lack of interest in Iranian gods, especially Auramazda, and the burning of Persepolis as actions which severed the bonds between the king and the Persian nobility who formed the main pool of satraps and other imperial staff.⁴⁷

Briant suggests that the basis on which the Achaemenid Empire ran was far more prosaic than cults around specific royal centres and that Alexander sought, and was gradually able to secure, the cooperation of the Persian nobility by assuming the functions of the Achaemenid king in relation to service relations with the aristocracy.⁴⁸ In the face of his overwhelming power the Persians accepted Alexander in this role in an effort to receive their own estates and status as gifts from the new king. Although not stated explicitly, following Briant's line of argument would suggest that the adoption of Persian court costume and protocols was a result of both the Persians and Alexander accepting this royal role rather than an example of Persianization in itself.⁴⁹ It was

45 Briant, *Cyrus to Alexander*, 875–876; Spawforth, "The Court of Alexander" also adopts this approach.

46 Notably Brosius, "Alexander and the Persians", 171–185; "New out of Old? Court and Court ceremonies in Achaemenid Persia" in *The Court and Court Society in Ancient Monarchies* ed. A.J.S. Spawforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7n. 1; Lane Fox, "Last of the Achaemenids?" in Tuplin (ed.), *Persian Responses* (2007), 272–286.

47 King of Asia: Plut. *Alex.* 34; Arr. *Anab.* 2.14.9. Darius uses the titles "great king, king of kings, king in Persia, king of countries" at Behistun DBI § 1; The titles used by Cyrus in the Cyrus Cylinder are observed above at 3n. 5; titles of Esarhaddon include "the great king, the mighty [king, king] of the universe, king of Assyria", D.D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* II (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1927) no. 648. On traditional Macedonian royal titles see R.M. Errington, "Macedonian 'Royal Style' and Its Historical Significance" *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 94 (1974), 20–37. Holding the rulership of Asia does however have a long tradition in Greek historiography, for example it is used by Herodotus of Cyrus and the Persians (Hdt. 1.95).

48 Briant, *Cyrus to Alexander*, 305–324, 781, 868–871; cf. Plut. *Alex.* 39; *Phoc.* 18.

49 An example of ceremonial being imposed upon a monarch in order to define the relationships between king, subordinates and guests is provided by N. Elias, *The Court Society*,

via court ceremony and differentiation in courtly costume that the king recognized the status and favour of his subordinates and reaffirmed it to their peers. The reception of Persians by Alexander, and of King Alexander by Persians, must therefore have been negotiated in the context of a fully developed royal court.⁵⁰

Both viewpoints conform to the criterion established in this paper for Persianization on the part of Alexander by almost exclusively examining his relationships with Persians.⁵¹ Both therefore have had to find ways of explaining Alexander's behaviour before the adoption of costume and ceremonial described in the ancient sources. For the superficial Persianization camp, the fact that these eastern elements were not introduced until after the destruction of Persepolis and the death of Darius, and do not represent the totality of Achaemenid ceremonial demonstrates their superficial nature. The problem we are left with is why would Alexander wait so long before trying to gain the support of Persians and also why, under the heading "Persianization", did he apparently take no steps to appeal to the other peoples of the empire before reaching Persia?

Briant seeks to justify Alexander appealing only to the Persians rather than the other peoples of the empire quite simply in his *History of the Persian Empire* through constant reference to the Persian diaspora throughout the empire. By doing so it can be suggested that Alexander had no need to appeal directly to local traditions within the empire because the Persian diaspora was extensive, controlling estates throughout the countryside and in direct association with urban centres and therefore remained the dominant socio-ethnic group.⁵² There was no need to appeal to alternative traditions.

This goes some way to explaining why the full regalia of the Persian court was only introduced when Alexander was firmly entrenched inside the imperial heartland and had destroyed the traditional links between the nobility and the Achaemenids. Until that point he had enjoyed only limited success in his attempts to establish himself as an alternative source of status and wealth

trans. E. Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 101–102. This work also provides an excellent introduction to the functioning of royal courts.

50 contra Brosius, "New out of Old?" 56–57.

51 Explicitly stated by Brosius, "Alexander and the Persians", n. 1.

52 Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 349–352, 481–482, 486–487, 500–501, 725. See also N. Sekunda, "Achaemenid Settlement in Caria, Lycia and Greater Phrygia" in *Achaemenid History VI: Asia Minor and Egypt: Old Cultures in a New Empire. Proceedings of the Groningen 1988 Achaemenid History Workshop* eds. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1991): 83–143.

in the eyes of the Persian nobility. Sardis was surrendered, as was Egypt and then Babylon, but the attempt of the governor of Damascus to surrender resulted in his murder by subordinates and Batis refused to surrender Gaza.⁵³ Briant argues that as the Macedonian advance became inexorable Persians began to turn towards Alexander in an effort to maintain their estates. It was therefore only when there were significant numbers of Persians associated with Alexander that the traditional systems of protocol and elite management became necessary.

Beyond “Persia”nization

Recently there has been an increase in suggestions that Alexander may have been adopting Persian paraphernalia before it was recognized in the sources. Spawforth’s article on the misinterpretation of Alexander’s use of Achaemenid dress and customs by Ehippus raises the possibility of further misrepresentations concealing the genuine steps he took in appealing to the traditions of his subjects.⁵⁴ Brunelle makes the persuasive argument that Achaemenid royal apparatus, especially the royal tents, was introduced in the aftermath of Issus (333 BC).⁵⁵ He reinterprets the story of the king sleeping with a copy of the *Iliad* under his pillow not just as the appropriation of the Achaemenid royal tent as booty, but also the adoption of ceremonial involving the tent.⁵⁶ This is especially attractive as it suggests Alexander was appealing not just to Persians but also to his other subjects, namely Greeks, by including a copy of Homer in the treasury.

In conclusion, it is entirely accurate to speak of Alexander’s actions in terms of Persianization. The term simply needs to be treated with caution. It should only be applied to the adoption of customs we can identify as Persian. It does not account for the numerous other traditions to which he may have appealed as he advanced through Asia. We therefore should not view the adoption of particularly Persian traditions in late 330 BC as the extent of Alexander’s efforts to be received as the legitimate king, but as part of a continuum of engagements

53 Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 843–856. Sidon: Arr. *Anab.* 2.15.6; Egypt: Diod. Sic. 17.49.2; Curt. 4.7.1–3; Babylon: Arr. *Anab.* 3.16.3–5; Curt. 5.1.17–33; Sardis: Arr. *Anab.* 1.17.4–6; Ephesus: Arr. *Anab.* 1.17.10. Curt. 3.12.27 ff.; 4.6.7–30.

54 Spawforth, “The Pamphleteer Ehippus.”

55 C. Brunelle, “Alexander’s Persian Pillow and Plutarch’s Cultured Commander” *The Classical Journal* 112 (2017): 257–278; see also Spawforth, “The Court of Alexander”, 94–97.

56 Plut. *Alex.* 8 and 26.

with local traditions within which we may include, for example, his adoption by Ada of Caria, being represented in pharaonic style in Egypt alongside the entry into Babylon and compliance with Chaldean diviners.⁵⁷

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57 Ada: Plut. *Alex.* 22; Diod. Sic. 17.24.2–3; Arr. *Anab.* 1.23.7f.; Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary* 1, 152–154. Egypt: Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 173–178. Alexander's settlements with the Greeks on an *ad hoc* basis see Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire*, 250–258; M. Faraguna, "Alexander and the Greeks" in *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great*, ed. J. Roisman (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 109–113. It would be more appropriate to see Alexander's settlements with the various groups of his empire as bespoke.

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Appendix: Table of Persianising Elements

<i>Arr. Anab.</i> 4.7.3–7, 8.2, 10.5–12.5, 14.1–2.	<i>Plut. Alex.</i> 45; <i>De Alex. fort.</i> 329f–330a.	<i>Diod. Sic.</i> 17.77.4–6.	<i>Curt.</i> 6.6.1–7.	<i>Just. Epit.</i> 12.3.8–12.
		Diadem.	Purple diadem variegated with white.	Diadem.
Tiara.				
Dress of the Medes.	Compromise between Persian and Median costume.	White robe and Persian sash.	Persian garb.	Attire of Persian monarchs.
Obeisance.	Obeisance by Macedonians.		Obeisance by Macedonians.	Obeisance
			Servile duties for Macedonians.	
			Use of Darius' ring.	
		Harem, one concubine for every day of the year.	Harem of 365.	Harem.
		Asian ushers.		
		Distinguished Persians as guards.		
		Cloaks with purple borders for companions.	Persian dress for friends, the cavalry.	Companions to wear robes of gold and purple.
		Horses in Persian harness.		
Barbaric ways of drinking.				Extravagant feasting.
Mutilation of Bessus.				

Sons of Heracles: Antony and Alexander in the Late Republic

Kyle Erickson

Him the father made equal in honor even to the blessed immortals, and a golden throne is built for him in the house of Zeus; beside him, kindly disposed, sits Alexander, the god of the dancing diadem, who brought destruction to the Persians. Facing them is established the seat of centaur-slaying Heracles ... there he joins in feasting with the heavenly ones and rejoices exceedingly in the grandsons of his grandsons, for the son of Kronos has removed old age from their limbs, and his very own descendants are called immortal. Both have as ancestor the mighty son of Heracles, and both trace their family back in the end to Heracles. Therefore, whenever, now having drunk his fill of fragrant nectar, he leaves the feast for the home of his loving wife, to one he gives his bow and the quiver that hangs beneath the arm, and to the other his iron club, its surface pitted with knots; to the ambrosial chamber of white-ankled Hebe they lead both the weapons and the bearded son of Zeus himself.

THEOCRITUS *Idyll* 17, 16–33 (HUNTER translation¹)



These lines from the poet Theocritus eulogize Ptolemy I and Alexander during the reign of Ptolemy II in Alexandria, but for the outcome of a battle another poet could likely have paired another descendant of Heracles with Alexander, Marcus Antonius (more commonly Mark Antony).² Had Antony and Cleopatra

¹ R. Hunter, *Theocritus: Encomium of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

² For Antony as an imitator of Heracles from whom he claimed descent see: Plutarch *Life of Antony*, 4: “He had also a noble dignity of form; and shapely beard, a broad forehead, and an aquiline nose were thought to show the virile qualities peculiar to the portraits and statues of Heracles. Moreover, there was an ancient tradition that the Antonii were Heracleidae,

(Ptolemy's descendant) defeated Octavian at Actium it may have been possible that Antony would have succeeded in controlling the entirety of the Roman Empire, which encompassed large swaths of Alexander's former dominion. With this battle, roughly three centuries after the death of the Argead king, a Roman general had finally completed the replacement of the descendants of Alexander's companions as the inheritors of his empire. However, before this defeat a series of Roman generals vied for control of Alexander's conquests, each of these men, not the least Pompey the Great, engaged with the image and reputation of Alexander. For a Roman audience of the late Republic and the early Imperial period, it was not only the conqueror who could be imitated but Alexander's personal flaws allowed such imitations to be used against political opponents. Furthermore, Alexander's failure to do what Rome had so successfully done and maintain and transfer his empire beyond his own personal glory could be used to belittle his accomplishments. His success, so tied to his conquests, could serve as a double-edged sword in the competition for power that finally ended at Actium. The seeds of this Roman attitude were sown in their dealings with Alexander's degenerate successors.

So, like Achilles,³ Alexander was lost in the brilliance of his youth and did not live to see his accomplishments weathered down by the mundane problems of ruling his new empire. Instead that task fell to the group of nobles whom

being descendants of Anton, a son of Heracles. And this tradition Antony thought that he confirmed, both by the shape of his body, as has been said, and by his attire ..." For the most explicit comparison of this scene see: Plutarch, *Demetrius and Antony*, 3 (translation Perrin). It is also important to note that while modern commentators often associate Antony's Herculean associations with a man subdued by a woman rather than the world conquering hero as a result of Octavian's propaganda the negative characterisation is not the only available interpretation. See O. Hekster, "Hercules, Omphale, and Octavian's 'Counter-Propaganda'", *BABESCH* 79 (2004): 171–178. For the ancestry of Alexander see E.A. Fredricksmeyer, "The Ancestral Rites of Alexander the Great", *Classical Philology* 61, no. 3 (1966): 179–182.

Despite the obvious potential, this chapter does not extend its discussion of Antony and Alexander beyond the end of Antiquity and attempts to focus on the life of the historical Antony as best as can be reconstructed through the sources, rather than the more famous modern Antony from Shakespeare to Richard Burton. The modern connections between the two have been well covered in L. McJannet, "Antony and Alexander: Imperial Politics in Plutarch, Shakespeare, and Some Modern Historical Texts", *College Literature* 20, no. 3 (1993): 1–18.

- 3 See W. Heckel, "Alexander, Achilles, and Heracles: Between Myth and History", in *East and West in the World Empire of Alexander: Essays in Honour of Brian Bosworth*, ed. P.V. Wheatley and E. Baynham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 21–34 for the links between Alex-

he had brought with him across the continent. After more than twenty years of struggles to carve a portion of Alexander's empire into their own domain, it is unclear the extent to which the dream of reuniting the kingdom played into the ideologies of the successor kingdoms. In Asia and North Africa, two men, Seleucus and Ptolemy, were able to claim the majority of Alexander's conquests. The friendship between the two men is often credited with their unwillingness to attack each other's territory, even when both laid claim to the same region of Coele Syria.⁴ The relative inactivity of Ptolemy in expanding his empire beyond its base in Egypt has led some scholars to suggest that he had no desire to recreate Alexander's empire and instead sought to consolidate his gains.⁵ Meeus and Strootman have both separately argued that the rhetoric employed at the Ptolemaic court gave no hint of abandoning the dream of reuniting the empire, even if it proved beyond the realm of practicality, and thus never abandoned the Alexander prototype for a Hellenistic king, including the last of the Ptolemaic queens.⁶

Given this legacy of claims over the entirety of the eastern Mediterranean, the emergence of Rome as a great power inevitably invited comparisons between individual commanders and Alexander as well as the Roman state and Alexander.⁷ For the Roman authors of the Augustan age, Rome would have emerged triumphant over Alexander, just as it had done over his degenerate successors.⁸ It was only in the final moments before the death of the last of the successor kingdoms did anyone seek to combine the two forces—Alexander's legacy and Roman power into a vision of a single new kingdom. The failure of

ander and Achilles as a creation of later writers; it is apparent that the major hero on which Alexander modelled himself was Heracles rather than Achilles or any other god. Compare, however, J.M. Mossman, "Tragedy and Epic in Plutarch's Alexander", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 108 (1988): 83–93 for the parallelism between Achilles and Alexander used by Plutarch in his life.

4 For the claims of both kings see: Diod. 20.113.4.

5 E.g. G. Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, trans. T. Saavedra (London, 2001), 28.

6 A. Meeus, "The Territorial Ambitions of Ptolemy I", in *The Age of the Successors and the Creation of the Hellenistic Kingdoms (323–276 BC)*, ed. H. Hauben and A. Meeus, *Studia Hellenistica* 53 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 263–306; R. Strootman, "Men to Whose Rapacity Neither Sea nor Mountain Sets a Limit"—The Aims of the Diadochs", in *The Age of the Successors and the Creation of the Hellenistic Kingdoms (323–276 BC)*, ed. H. Hauben and A. Meeus, *Studia Hellenistica* 53 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 307–322.

7 D. Spencer, *The Roman Alexander: Readings a Cultural Myth* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 1–38.

8 For the supposed attitude of Augustus to the Ptolemies in comparison to Alexander see Cassius Dio 51.16.5.

Antony and Cleopatra was not in the re-imaging of Alexander's empire, but the combination of Octavian's ability to exploit the negative perceptions of Alexander and the east at Rome, alongside the final military defeat at Actium.

Well before the final engagement between a 'Hellenistic' power (albeit led by a Roman commander) and Rome, Alexander had become the criteria against which the Roman state measured her own success. Alexander served as the point against which all of Rome's greatest generals and her greatest enemies would be measured. The pursuit of Alexander-like glory increased substantially after Rome's initial forays into the Greek world and by the time that Pompey Magnus dissolved the greatest of Alexander's successor kingdoms,⁹ Alexander imitation had become an art amongst the Roman elite. However, as we can see from this passage of Livy, Alexander was far from regarded as a uniformly good role-model for aspiring Roman elites:

Alexander would, if beaten in a single battle, have been beaten in the war; but what battle could have overthrown the Romans, whom Caudium could not overthrow, nor Cannae? Nay, many a time—however prosperous the outset of his enterprise might have been—would he have wished for Indians and Persians and unwarlike Asiatics, and would have owned that he had before made war upon women, as Alexander, King of Epirus, is reported to have said, when mortally wounded, contrasting the type of war waged by this very youth in Asia, with that which had fallen to his own share.¹⁰

With Roman defeat of more and more of the successor kingdoms, Roman generals could claim to have at least equalled, if not having outdone, the Macedonian king. To claim even greater Roman success, the complications provided by Alexander's turbulent life and his untimely death allowed Roman authors and politicians to exploit the negative aspects of his character against their opponents.

Thus, as Roman generals moved from defeating Alexander wannabes such as Hannibal,¹¹ to encroaching into Alexander's territory (i.e. 'the East'), the comparisons between Alexander's ambitions and Roman successes became inevitable. The most potent of these claims on Alexander's legacy came from

9 For the context of the Pompeian settlement of the east, see for example R. Morstein-Marx, *Hegemony to Empire: The Development of the Roman Imperium in the East from 148 to 62 BC*, Hegemony to Empire (Berkeley: Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 324–333.

10 Livy 9.19—Foster 1926.

11 Spencer, *The Roman Alexander*, 168–169. See also Cicero *Academica* 2.2 and Livy 35.14.11.

Pompey who took the cognomen *Magnus* in imitation of the Macedonian conqueror.¹² However, Pompey's successes in the East were far from complete from the perspective of a second Alexander. The Parthians who had claimed from the Seleucids the majority of the eastern half of Alexander's empire and could be looked to as the successors to the Persians remained unconquered. As Pompey's rivals emerged from his shadow, they too sought their own comparisons with Alexander. For Caesar, Suetonius' *Life of Julius Caesar* gives us the story of his encounter with the statue of Alexander in Spain and his own insubstantial career at the same age¹³ and also there are his reported plans for an invasion of Parthia. The other triumvir Crassus lost his head in his own Parthian campaign when he refused to take advice and met the Parthians on the open plains at Carrahae.¹⁴ These dreams of Parthian conquest did not die with Crassus and Caesar but rather Crassus' death added further impetus to Roman eastern expansion. Following the division of the empire between Octavian,¹⁵ Lepidus, and Antony only the latter was in a position to expand Roman interests at the expense of Parthia.

Our understanding of Antony's motives and actions in the East is dependent on reading through layers of Augustan propaganda aimed at discrediting the princeps' former colleague and brother-in-law. It is only through this Augustan lens that we are able to discern how Antony fit into the model of a Roman general and a successor to Alexander. Antony's dalliances with Cleopatra, the last of the heirs of Alexander's Companions, provided Octavian with easy fodder for discrediting him. Regardless of whether or not it actually occurred, one of the most important arrows in Octavian's bow became the so-called "Donations of Alexandria". Discerning Antony's use of associations with Alexander in the broad category of *imitatio* is extremely difficult. This is not only because of Octavian's propaganda, but also because of the gods with whom Antony associated himself in the East, Heracles and Dionysus. Both were significant for

12 It seems likely the application of the title of Megas to Alexander is a creation of Antiochus III's propaganda when he first begins to use this title after his own campaigns in the eastern half of his ancestral empire. See C. Rubincam, "A Tale of Two 'Magni': Justin/Troglus on Alexander and Pompey", *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 54, no. 3 (2005): 265–274.

13 Suetonius *Julius Caesar* 7.

14 Plutarch *Crassus* 23–27; Cassius Dio 40.21–24.

15 See D. Engels, "Prodigies and Religious Propaganda: Seleucus and Augustus", in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 15, ed. C. Deroux (Brussels: Éditions Latomus, 2010), 153–177 for the argument that to counter Antony's Ptolemaic connections, Octavian drew connections with the Seleucids. Both men also drew connections to Alexander.

Alexander's own image, and even more so for how the *Diadochoi* constructed an image of Alexander. But it is nearly impossible to differentiate whether or not Antony was drawing on associations with Dionysus and Heracles because he was imitating Alexander or if these associations were independent of Alexander and in fact fit better into a pattern of Hellenistic or Roman aristocratic competition. The entirety of the question of Antony's Alexandrian image is tied up with his activities in the east and his failed attempts at an eastern *anabasis*. In relation to this the chapter will now focus on four areas in which Antony and Alexander overlap: the first is their role as descendants of Heracles and competitors within his image; the second is their association with Dionysus; the third is domination or control of both men by women from the East; and finally we will examine Antony's so-called 'Donations of Alexandria' as an episode of Alexander *imitatio*. In the first two cases, Alexander provides a model through which a positive relationship with the god could be achieved, and where Octavian's propaganda created a view of Antony as a degenerate version. In the final case, both Antony and Alexander failed to properly plan for the succession of empire. Thus despite his attempts, Octavian's victory creates an Antony that can only ever be a failed Alexander, who shared many of his flaws but lacked his brilliance.

Alexander, Antony and Heracles

Following Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire, there were two gods, both associated with Alexander, who came to symbolize eastern conquests: Heracles and Dionysus. In the surviving iconography from the reign of Alexander, Heracles serves as an important point of reference. For as Plutarch records Alexander telling Diogenes: "I imitate Heracles and Perseus, also following in the footsteps of Dionysus".¹⁶ Now, the interchange between the king and philosopher is likely fictional, but it was clear that, at least by the 2nd century AD, Alexander was associated with those three heroes who were each strongly associated with the East. The direct evidence for much of this imitation within Alexander's lifetime is difficult to find. However, there is evidence for strong links with Heracles in his iconography and a large number of literary connections to Dionysus. In terms of Heracles' iconography, Alexander's coinage provides the clearest link between Alexander and the hero/god as the majority

¹⁶ Plutarch *Mor.* 332a.

of his silver coinage depicts a beardless Heracles on the obverse.¹⁷ More direct links between the king and the hero can be found on the so-called 'Alexander sarcophagus' found at Sidon, on which Alexander wears the lion-skin cap of Heracles.¹⁸ These images may recall Alexander's actual dress, for if we believe the report of Ehippus then Alexander often liked to dress up as variety of gods, including Heracles.¹⁹ On the other hand, it is clear that Alexander's successors, such as Ptolemy, promoted a link between the deceased king and the conqueror of the Nemean Lion, as we have already seen in Theocritus' *Idyll* at the opening of this chapter.

As Palagia has shown, the Ptolemaic dynasty followed Alexander's example and linked themselves both to Alexander and Heracles.²⁰ This included the production of coinage showing the kings with the features and symbols of Heracles as well as through poetry, as we have already seen. This legacy may have been picked up by Antony, but it seems likely that it already existed before his arrival in Egypt.²¹ The Roman moneyer Livineius Regulus produced in 42 BC a series of *aurei* which featured pairings between the triumvirs and their mythical ancestors: Octavian and Aeneas carrying Anchises, Lepidus and the Vestal Aemilia, and Antony and Heracles.²² Other associations with Antony and Her-

17 See O. Mørkholm, *Early Hellenistic Coinage: From the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea (336–188 BC)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 42–43 for the date of the introduction of the head of Heracles onto Alexander's silver coinage as part of his monetary reform.

18 Istanbul, Archaeological Museum 68. See W. Heckel, "Mazaeus, Callisthenes and the Alexander Sarcophagus", *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 55, no. 4 (January 1, 2006): 385–396 for an alternative identification of the original occupant of the sarcophagus. Cf. O. Palagia, *Hephaestion's Pyre and the Royal Hunt of Alexander* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 186–189; A. Stewart, *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 298; O. Palagia, "Imitation of Herakles in Ruler Portraiture: A Survey from Alexander to Maximinus Daza", *Boreas* 9 (1986): 141 raises the contentious issue of whether or not we should see something of Alexander in the image of the beardless Heracles before Alexander's death, if it is possible to see the link from the Alexandrian mint after his death.

19 Athen. XII.537e.

20 Palagia, "Imitation of Herakles in Ruler Portraiture", 143–144.

21 See U. Huttner, "Marcus Antonius Und Heracles", in *Rom Und Der Griechische Osten: Festschrift Für Hatto H. Schmitt Zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. C. Shubert and K. Brodersen (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995), 103–112 for an overview of Antony's relationship with Heracles.

22 Crawford, *RRC*, no. 494.2a. See Hekster, "Hercules, Omphale, and Octavian's 'Counter-

acles are much harder to find, given the large range of possible connotations of lion imagery it is not necessary to see the lions that appear on Antony's coinage as a reference to Heracles.²³ However, if the now lost *aureus* showing a lion walking to the left, holding a sword, with a star in the field was really the same the types issued by Alexander at Babylon²⁴ then there may be a combination of Alexander and Heracles imitation at work.

While both men appear to have developed an association with Heracles, the ways in which this connection was used by their contemporaries and successors were very different. Alexander's association with Heracles became a model for future rulers, both his immediate successors as we have seen above and for a large number of Romans particularly in the imperial period.²⁵ Antony's connections with Heracles were exploited in a far more negative light. Rather than the all-conquering hero, Antony could be associated with a Heracles tamed by Omphale, as we see in Plutarch:

Antony, on the contrary, like Heracles in paintings where Omphale is seen taking away his club and stripping off his lion's skin, was often disarmed by Cleopatra, subdued by her spells and persuaded to drop from his hands great undertakings and necessary campaigns, only to roam about and play with her on the sea-shores by Canopus and Taphosiris. And at last, like Paris, he ran away from battle and sank upon her bosom; although, more truly stated, Paris ran away to Helen's chamber after he had been defeated; but Antony ran away in chase of Cleopatra and thereby threw away the victory.²⁶

Here Antony's association with Cleopatra overshadows any of his previous 'heroic' deeds and he is branded a coward. Whether or not this element of Plutarch's attack on Antony derives from Octavian's propaganda,²⁷ it is clear that his liaisons with Cleopatra overshadowed the rest of his career. Even when

Propaganda"; P. Ijalab Perez, "La Familia Antonia Descendiente de Anton, Hijo de Heracles: La Manipulación de Un Mito", *Studia Historica Historia Antigua* 27 (2009): 177–186.

23 See Hekster, "Hercules, Omphale, and Octavian's 'Counter-Propaganda'", 172 for the rejection of these as Herculean; see Palagia, "Imitation of Herakles in Ruler Portraiture", 144.

24 Palagia, "Imitation of Herakles in Ruler Portraiture", 144; J.H. Abry, "À Propos D'un Symbole de Marc Antonie: Le Lion", in *Marc Antonie, Son Idéologie et Sa Descendance. Actes Du Colloque Organisé À Lyon Le Jeudi 28 Juin 1990*. (Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1993), 55–68.

25 See Palagia, "Imitation of Herakles in Ruler Portraiture" for a survey.

26 Plut. *Demetrius and Antony*, 3 (trans. Perrin).

27 See Hekster, "Hercules, Omphale, and Octavian's 'Counter-Propaganda'" for a convincing

examining his connections to Heracles, the impact of Octavian's attempt to disgrace Antony on account of oriental luxury dominate the narrative.

Alexander, Antony and Dionysus

The other of the Eastern conqueror, Dionysus, could have served as a model for both Alexander and Antony. Plutarch links the degeneration of Alexander to his movement east, while at the same time Dionysus replaces the Homeric heroes as the models for Alexander's conquests in the narrative. For the Ptolemaic kings who followed Alexander in Egypt, the image of victory became increasingly associated with Dionysiac pomp.²⁸ Although its origins remain open to some debate, the diadem which many associate with Dionysus became the key symbol of victorious Hellenistic kingship.²⁹ For his Roman successors, the diadem became a symbol of kingship and deeply problematic for Caesar and was thus avoided by Antony.³⁰ However, during Antony's time in the East, Dionysiac associations were too important for his image to be ignored, whatever problems they might have caused in the west. Antony had long toyed with Dionysiac associations,³¹ but these became much more apparent when at

rebuttal to the view that the Hercules—Omphale negative image of Antony is a creation of Octavian's propaganda.

- 28 For the famous Dionysiac pomp see: E.E. Rice, *The Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Oxford, 1983). For Dionysus and Ptolemy II see: M. Goyette, "Ptolemy II Philadelphus and the Dionysiac Model of Political Authority", *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 2, no. 1 (September 16, 2010): 1–13.
- 29 A. Bell, *Spectacular Power in the Greek and Roman City* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 119; A.W. Collins, "The Royal Costume and Insignia of Alexander the Great", *American Journal of Philology* 133, no. 3 (2012): 371–402; E.A. Fredricksmeyer, "The Origin of Alexander's Royal Insignia", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974–) 127 (1997): 97–109; N.G.L. Hammond, "Arms and the King: The Insignia of Alexander the Great", *Phoenix* 43, no. 3 (October 1, 1989): 217–224.
- 30 Cicero *Phil.* 2.85; R.A.G. Carson, "Caesar and the Monarchy", *Greece & Rome* 4, no. 1 (1957): 46–53; E. Rawson, "Caesar's Heritage: Hellenistic Kings and Their Roman Equals", *The Journal of Roman Studies* 65 (1975): 148–159; K.W. Welwei, "Das Angebot Des Diadems an Caesar Und Das Luperkalienproblem", *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 16, no. 1 (1967): 44–69.
- 31 See K. Scott, "Octavian's Propaganda and Antony's De Sua Ebrietate", *Classical Philology* 24, no. 2 (1929): 133–141 for sources and see M.D. Litwa, *Becoming Divine: An Introduction to Deification in Western Culture* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013), 30–37.

Athens³² and at Ephesus.³³ Furthermore, he produced coinage with his bust wearing wreaths of Dionysaic ivy.³⁴

Despite Octavian's attempts to use Antony's actions to discredit him, particularly his association with Dionysian revelry, laziness and drunkenness, which are most evident in Plutarch's moral criticism,³⁵ Antony's presentation as Dionysus fit particularly well within the context of previous Hellenistic kings, if not with Alexander's own image. The most obvious parallel of a successor king is Demetrius Poliorcetes who likewise associated himself with Dionysus when in Athens and even took up residence in the Parthenon.³⁶ Alexander's Dionysian revels in Carmania (that appear only in the vulgate tradition)³⁷ are probably a later connection between Alexander and his victory in the East, building on Ptolemaic 'spin'.³⁸ Although Bosworth demonstrates that the connection between military victory in the East and Dionysus is a later creation that still impacts modern scholarship,³⁹ the link had already been made by the time that Diodorus was writing his history and thus would have been a model on which Antony and other Roman commanders drew. The possibility of connections between Roman triumphs and Dionysian revels, alongside the increasing importance of Dionysus as a model for late Hellenistic kings, would have provided Antony with ample opportunity to combine his quest for glory in the East, along Alexandrian models, with the pomp and ritual of a Roman triumph in the guise of Dionysus.

32 Plut. *Antony*, 24.

33 Plut. *Antony*, 60.

34 *RPC* 2201; see D. Mannsperger, "Apollo Gegen Dionysos: Numismatische Beiträge Zu Octavians Rolle Als Vindex Libertatis", *Gymnasium* 80 (1973): 381–404 for the Apolline response of Octavian.

35 "But perhaps the most decisive reason was that tragic patterning could not fit in to Plutarch's conception of Caesar's downfall: for Plutarch, external factors destroyed Caesar, whereas internal forces worked on Alexander, as they did on Demetrius and Antony." Mossman, "Tragedy and Epic in Plutarch's Alexander", 92. Cf. P. Bosman, "Signs and Narrative Design in Plutarch's Alexander", *Akroterion* 56 (December 2011): 91–106. For an example, Antony's continued commitment to revelry even after his final defeat: Plut. *Antony*, 71.

36 Plut. *Demetrius*, 23–24; See Plut. *Demetrius*, 12–14 for the Athenian's first reception of Demetrius. See also: Bell, *Spectacular Power in the Greek and Roman City*, 100–107; J.R. Holton, "Demetrius Poliorcetes, Son of Poseidon and Aphrodite. Cosmic and Memorial Significance in the Athenian Ithyphallic Hymn.", *Mnemosyne* 67 (2014): 370–390.

37 Plut. *Alexander*, 67.1–6; Diod. Sic. 17.106; Curt. 9.10.24–28; Arrian, 7.28.2.

38 A.B. Bosworth, *From Arrian to Alexander: Studies in Historical Interpretation* (Clarendon Press, 1988), 67–77.

39 *Ibid.* 67–71.

Alexander, Antony and the Romance of the East

By the time of Antony's rise to power, there had long been a tradition of associating conquests in Greece and the east with both Hellenism and a competition with Alexander for the role of supreme conqueror. This is evident in the spoils taken in the various conflicts through which Rome conquered the East, for example Metellus' acquisition of the famous Lysippean statue group of the companions who fell at Granicus⁴⁰ even if his pursuit of this statue was for its artistic rather than Alexandrian characteristics.⁴¹ The increasing interaction with the successors to Alexander's conquests accelerated Roman comparisons as one after another the Hellenistic kings bent the knee to their Roman conquerors. The most significant of these, Pompey, lies for the most part outside the scope of this chapter; although, there are some precedents that need to be considered in light of Antony's own eastern adventures. Pompey is the first Roman to take the title *Magnus* which appears to be in imitation of the title used for Alexander after the reign of Antiochus III.⁴² The ambiguity of this title which recalls both Persian court titles, defeated enemies, and Alexander's own potential for eastern despotism represents one of the fundamental problems in understanding how the later Republican audience after Pompey understood Alexander imitation.

In returning to Antony and Alexander, location appears to have had a significant impact on the comparisons that can be drawn between the two men. Octavian's attempt to define Antony as un-Roman found a far more receptive audience when Antony was not physically present in the city and while he spent his time travelling between monarchic courts in the East. In this regard Antony's own actions, in particular with Cleopatra, did nothing to aid him in refuting Octavian's attacks. As Spencer states:

Curtius' emphasis on the Macedonian inability to shake off Alexander's increasing orientalism is comparable to popular distaste for Antony's supposed enslavement by the 'barbarian Queen', Cleopatra. A connection between the above slogan and the motif of *dominatio* (essentially an expression of tyranny: government by Lord and Master) in propaganda against Antony is evident in the particular hostility shown by Augustus to the term.⁴³

40 Vell. Pat. 1.11.3–4.

41 E.S. Gruen, *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 116, 143.

42 *supra* n. 10.

43 Spencer, *The Roman Alexander*, 194.

Before turning to Antony's so-called "Donations of Alexandria" as another example of how Octavian was able to turn Antony's Alexandrian settlement of the East into a political liability because of his relationship with Cleopatra, it is useful to look at both Antony and Alexander's relationships with women. Despite having three wives and at least one mistress, the stories of Alexander's relationships with women are not a major feature of either the historical or the ahistorical literary accounts. Even in the *Alexander Romance* tradition, women paired with Alexander are missing: as Stoneman states: "A perhaps surprising feature of the *Alexander Romance* is the absence of sex."⁴⁴ This is of course very different from the image that we get of Antony, and the reluctance to identify potential liaisons for Alexander may be the result of the *Diadochoi's* desire to monopolize links with their deceased king.

For Antony, his interactions with women, particularly but not only Cleopatra, moved from those of a heroic playboy to that of a failure and a coward. As we have seen in Plutarch's comparison to Heracles and Omphale, Cleopatra could be viewed as the cause of Antony's failure.⁴⁵ One of the ways in which Antony's actions were effectively exploited by Octavian were his relationships with women, even when similar liaisons had not hindered the political careers of other Roman generals. Octavian was able to portray his sister, married to Antony, as the wronged party as Antony took another wife in Cleopatra.

This requirement of monogamy did not apply to Argead or Hellenistic kings, but where Philip II's marriage practices could have turned problematic to the succession and could be used to question Alexander's status as heir;⁴⁶ Alexander's sexual mores were never seriously questioned. Despite the lack of sex in the *Romance* tradition, the historical Alexander had numerous conquests, both real and perhaps imagined: these included not only his three wives (Roxane, Stateira and Parysatis);⁴⁷ but also Barsine, the wife of Memnon;⁴⁸ Stateira,

44 R. Stoneman, *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 128.

45 See for example, Livy *Periochae* 130; Propertius 2.15, 2. 16; Appian *BC* 5.9; Plut. *Antony* 28.

46 See A. Tronson, "Satyrus the Peripatetic and the Marriages of Philip II", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 104 (1984): 116–126 for the marriages of Philip.

47 Roxane: Arrian 4.19.4–6, 4.20.4; Curtius Rufus 8.4.21–30; Plut. *Alex.* 47.4; Plut. *Moralia* 338D; Strabo *Geog.* 11.11. Stateira and Parysatis: Aelian *Varia Historia* 8.7; Arrian 7.4.4–8; Athenaeus 12.538b; Diodorus 17.107.6; Justin 12.10; Plut. *Alex.* 70.2; Plut. *Moralia* 329D–F.

48 Arrian 7.4.4–6; Curtius Rufus 10.6.10–14; Justin 11.10; Plut. *Alex.* 21.4; Plut. *Eumenes* 1.

wife of Darius III;⁴⁹ Callixeina;⁵⁰ Campaspe;⁵¹ Cleophis;⁵² and Thalestris, queen of the Amazons;⁵³ not to mention a variety of concubines.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Alexander had a series of (non-sexual) relationships with mother-like figures, including his own mother Olympias, Queen Ada of Caria, and in the *Romance* tradition, Candace. Perhaps, Alexander's sexual conduct did not feature as prominently in his legacy because of the potential difficulties that could have been caused for the *Diadochoi* had other women claimed to have borne rightful heirs. Nevertheless, despite their relatively limited attestation, there are two incidents that show Alexander could have faced similar problems to Antony. The first depends on how one chooses to view the destruction of Persepolis, if we choose not to believe that the fire was a deliberate act of policy, then the Macedonian king and his companions were roused to such a fury by an Athenian woman (Thais) that burned a significant portion of one of their newly won cities.⁵⁵ Thais, often closely associated with Cleopatra's ancestor, nearly led Alexander to destroy his attempts to build a consensus between the Macedonians and the Persians, and endangered his empire.

A second disarming of Alexander by a woman can be found in the *Romance* tradition. Here Alexander has his life placed in the hands of Queen Candace. The basic outline of the story is as follows: Alexander wished to visit the country of Semiramis which was now ruled by Candace. However, one of Candace's sons had been married to the daughter of Porus who, in the *Romance* tradition, Alexander had killed and who sought revenge. On the other hand, Alexander, disguised as Antigonus had saved the wife of another of Candace's sons when she had been kidnapped by the king of the Bebryces. Following the rescue Alexander, disguised as Antigonus, went to the palace of Candace where he was shown a number of wonders and recognized by the Queen. Afterwards, the two brothers nearly came to blows over the desire to either kill or protect Alexander. Alexander manages to escape as he claims not to be Alexander but Antigonus.

49 For her death as a result of miscarriage see: Plut. *Alex.* 30.1; Just. 11.12; for Alexander's restraint see: Curt. 3.12.21–23; Plut. *Alex.* 21.4; Athen. 13.603 b–d; Plut. *Moralia* 6.522A; Aulus Gellius 7.8.1–4.

50 Athen. 10.434f–435a.

51 Aelian, *Varia Historia* 12.34; Lucian. *Essays in Portraiture* 7–8; Pliny, *NH* 35.84–97.

52 Curtius Rufus, 8.10.33–36; Justin, 12.7; Metz *Epitome*, 45.

53 Arrian 4.15.1–5, 7.13.2–6; Curtius Rufus 6.5.24–32; Diodorus 17.77.1–3; Justin 12.3; Plut. *Alex.* 46.1–2; Strabo *Geog.* 11.5.3–4.

54 Athenaeus 13.607f–608a; Curtius Rufus 6.6.7–9; Diodorus 17.77.4–7; Justin 12.3.

55 Plut. *Alex.* 38.1–4; Curtius Rufus 5.7.1–8; Diodorus, 17.72.1–6. Cf. J. Griffin, "Propertius and Antony", *The Journal of Roman Studies* 67 (1977): 20; A. McAuley this book.

Candace keeps his secret and allows him to escape unscathed.⁵⁶ Here we can see that even Alexander was not immune to the power that women could hold over him. Nonetheless, it is the failure of Alexander to provide a suitable heir early enough before his death that marked his greatest failure. It was this error that Antony appears to have attempted to correct in his arrangements of the east.

Donations of Alexandria

We will now turn to one of Antony's greatest propaganda failures, but perhaps political successes, the so-called "Donations of Alexandria". There are contrasting ways of regarding Antony's actions: one, and this is the view that Octavian exploits, is that Antony was acting as an un-Roman tyrant; the second is that Antony was attempting to solve the issue of succession in the East by creating a stable powerbase tied to his new eastern family, in effect solving Alexander's greatest failure and keeping nearly the entirety of his kingdom intact.

There are two preserved accounts of Antony's supposed gifts to Cleopatra and her children in Dio Cassius (49.41.4) and in Plutarch (*Life of Antony* 54.4–9) and both show clear elements of Octavian's propaganda efforts. Both authors emphasize the spectacular nature of the ceremony which may be over exaggerated if we believe that the consuls Domitus and Sosius thought they could cover up the nature of the donations contained within Antony's *acta*.⁵⁷ However, as Strootman has shown, the ceremony fits well within a Hellenistic context as a coronation ritual and with the 'legitimate' aims of Cleopatra, given her heritage.⁵⁸ That the two pro-Antonian consuls were aware of the extent that this played into Octavian's characterization of Antony as bewitched by Cleopatra, no longer properly Roman, and therefore worked to actively suppress that impression is clearly evident within Cassius Dio's account. Following Strootman's analysis we should place the donations within their Hellenistic context and as part of the re-organization of the Near East by Caesar and Antony in an effort to replace the Pompeian settlement undertaken nearly a generation prior. Within this reorganization, Antony appears to have played the part of

⁵⁶ AR 3.18–23.

⁵⁷ Cassius Dio 49.41.4; See C.B.R. Pelling, *Plutarch: Life of Antony* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 249.

⁵⁸ R. Strootman, "Queen of Kings—Kleopatra VII and the Donations of Alexandria." in *Kingdoms and Principalities in the Roman Near East*, ed. M. Facella and T. Kaizer (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 140–157.

a successful Alexander who, rather than leaving a legacy of warfare, instead established clear lines of succession tied to himself and to the Roman state. While Antony and Cleopatra were ultimately defeated by Octavian, Antony's solution to the problems of governing the eastern empire were in fact continued.

First, let us look at the key territories assigned by Antony within the "Donations". Antony established Cleopatra and Caesarion as King and Queen in traditional Ptolemaic fashion over Egypt, Cyprus, Libya, and Coele Syria. Amongst their joint children, he allotted Armenia, Media and Parthia to Alexander Helios and Phoenicia, Syria, and Cilicia to Ptolemy Philadelphus.⁵⁹ In total these territories combined the regions of the Ptolemaic empire with those of the former Seleucid Empire and are familiar from a variety of Hellenistic documents. Considering an example which reported to have accomplished the same goal, when Ptolemy III invaded Seleucid territory in c. 241 BC, he claimed to have conquered the entirety of the Seleucid realm: "the whole of the land on this side of the Euphrates, of Cilicia, Pamphylia ... Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Susiana, the Persis, Media and the rest of the land as far as Bactria."⁶⁰ Furthermore, he already had possession of "Egypt, Libya, Syria, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Lycia, Caria, and the islands of the Cyclades."⁶¹ These types of lists were common for the Hellenistic kings and often appeared to offer a form of imitation of Alexander.

The enumeration of territory which Antony could give away placed him in an elevated position compared with those to whom he gave the territory.⁶² Seneca uses an episode from Alexander's reign in his essay on benefits to demonstrate the position of power taken by the gift giver when Alexander gifted a city to one of his subordinates:

When the man to whom it was presented took measure of it and shrank from jealousy that so great a gift would provoke saying that it was inappropriate to his circumstances, Alexander said: "I am not concerned with what it is appropriate for you to receive, but in fact what is appropriate for me to give."⁶³

59 Cassius Dio 49.41 and Plutarch *Life of Antony* 54.

60 *OGIS* 54; Austin 221. Cf. Strootman, "Queen of Kings—Kleopatra VII and the Donations of Alexandria".

61 *OGIS* 54; Austin 221.

62 See above on the importance of kings and gift giving.

63 Seneca *Concerning Benefits* 2.16.1.

The purpose of Seneca's passage is to criticize extravagant gift giving that places the recipient in an unrepayable debt and instead proposes a system in which the needs of the receiver are considered, a problem particularly important in the imperial context.⁶⁴ This passage does emphasize the relationship of giver and receiver. This is all the more important in Antony's case as he was not only the benefactor, but he was also either the husband or the father (in either case the *paterfamilias*) of those receiving the benefactions.

By supposedly giving away this territory, Antony was reinforcing his own position while simultaneously creating a network of client kingdoms beholden to Rome and to himself. By his marriage to Cleopatra, the adoption of Caesarion, as well as the production of his own children, Antony integrated himself into the long standing Hellenistic practice of dynastic intermarriage which had been a key mechanism of control for many of these same regions.⁶⁵ For Huzar this integration was part of a fundamental understanding of a way in which to govern the expanded Roman world:

Yet behind it lay the broader vision of the Roman Empire which Julius Caesar had realized. The empire, to incorporate the whole Mediterranean, must equalize its peoples, must fuse the Hellenistic with the Latin and Gallic worlds. The intense Roman nationalism and sense of superiority over conquered lands must give way to a cultural integration. Antony seems not to have worked through all the implications of this conviction, but he was spontaneously living such a position.⁶⁶

This position was advertised by the coinage produced outside of Egypt after the donations (e.g. in Antioch) of Cleopatra with the legend "Queen of Kings"

64 Cf. Spencer, *The Roman Alexander*, 75.

65 For a discussion of the political aspects of Hellenistic dynastic inter and intra marriage see D. Ogden, *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death: The Hellenistic Dynasties* (London: Duckworth, 1999). See also A. McAuley, "Princess & Tigress: Apama of Kyrene", in *Seleukid Royal Women*, ed. A. Coşkun and A. McAuley (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016), 179–194; R. Strootman, "The Heroic Company of My Forebears: The Ancestor Galleries of Antiochos I of Kommagene at Nemrut Dağı and the Role of Royal Women in the Transmission of Hellenistic Kingship", in *Seleukid Royal Women*, ed. A. Coşkun and A. McAuley (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016), 213–234; R. Wenghofer and D.J. Houle, "Marriage Diplomacy and the Political Role of Royal Women in the Seleukid Far East", in *Seleukid Royal Women*, ed. A. Coşkun and A. McAuley (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016), 195–212.

66 E.G. Huzar, *Mark Antony: A Biography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978), 186.

and Antony with a legend highlighting his triumph in Armenia. East and West were united under the new rulers. However, Antony had fundamentally miscalculated the perception of his actions in Rome and once again further opened himself to criticism by Octavian.

Beyond providing fodder for Octavian's propaganda in Rome and enhancing both his own prestige and that of Cleopatra in the East, the donations changed very little of the day to day governing structures in the Eastern Roman Empire. In fact, the restoration and expansion of the Ptolemaic empire under Cleopatra with the support of first Julius Caesar and then Mark Antony had already occurred.⁶⁷ These early concessions of land to Cleopatra had included much of the territory supposedly granted to her in the "Donations"; for example, Cyprus had returned to Ptolemaic rule with the arrival of Julius Caesar in Alexandria in 48 BC and yet was included in Plutarch's account.⁶⁸ Furthermore, Schrapel has shown that Octavian at least consented to some of these gifts of territory before the two triumvirs fell out;⁶⁹ for example, western Cilicia was included in the treaty of Brundisium which divided the empire between them, although Ptolemaic administrators do not appear in the historical record until 38 BC.⁷⁰ Not only did the other important triumvir appear to accept parts of this settlement, there had been no similar attacks on Antony's previous settlements at Tarsus (41 BC) and at Antioch (37/6 BC). So finally, as Pelling and others have rightly pointed out,⁷¹ the donations did very little to change the actual governing structures of the East, Roman governors still continued to operate even in the areas granted to Antony's family.

However, this consensus seems to excessively under-emphasize the significance of these gifts, for example: "These 'gifts' were only gestures"⁷² and included land that was not Antony's to give; "Parthia was not A.'s to give and represented only a hope for the future."⁷³ Pelling also suggests that these were

67 Pelling, *Plutarch: Life of Antony*, 250; Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 244; Strootman, "Queen of Kings—Kleopatra VII and the Donations of Alexandria".

68 Cassius Dio 42.35-5.

69 T. Schrapel, *Das Reich der Kleopatra: quellenkritische Untersuchungen zu den "Landschenkungen" Mark Antons* (Trier: Trierer Historische Forschungen, 1996), 267–268.

70 Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 249; Schrapel, *Das Reich der Kleopatra: quellenkritische Untersuchungen zu den "Landschenkungen" Mark Antons*, 279.

71 Pelling, *Plutarch: Life of Antony*, 250; Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 244; Strootman, "Queen of Kings—Kleopatra VII and the Donations of Alexandria".

72 Pelling, *Plutarch: Life of Antony*, 249–250. See also: Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, 292; P. Southern, *Cleopatra* (Tempus, 1999), 115.

73 Pelling, *Plutarch: Life of Antony*, 249.

not meant as client kingdoms as the children were too young and the events too far in the future.⁷⁴ Rather it seems more sensible to view these “Donations” as fundamental to Antony’s attempt to reorganize the east as part of the Roman world, and as an important precedent that was followed even by his rival Augustus.⁷⁵ The precedent of Alexander and of the other Hellenistic kings made the gifts meaningful in the now dying Hellenistic context. It was the act of giving, rather than the precise nature of the gift, which created the bonds that Antony could have later exploited. However, Antony miscalculated the ability of his rival Octavian to exploit his actions as Roman overlord of the Hellenistic world and to portray him as another degenerate leader that fell to the lure of eastern luxuries.

Antony and Alexander both looked back to divine familial origins and throughout their lives linked themselves to both Heracles and Dionysus, but on their own it is impossible to tell whether Antony is imitating Alexander in these links or acting as any other Roman would. However, because of Pompey’s deliberate *imitatio* of Alexander in his eastern conquests the god of the dancing diadem was never far from the minds of the late Republican generals who sought to conquer the East. For Antony, this manifested itself most clearly in his attempts at conquest against the Parthians; but, like the other Romans of his generation, these conquests fell short of Alexander’s model. Antony’s treatment of Brutus’ body after his suicide at Philippi bears a resemblance to Alexander’s treatment of Darius’ body and puts Antony firmly within the model of Alexander.⁷⁶ However, if Philippi marked a high point in his career, the failure in Parthia and then at Actium sealed his fate as another unsuccessful imitator of the great conqueror. Nevertheless, there are some indications that Antony was perhaps even more successful than Alexander in his attempts to reorganize the east into a familial possession. Despite his failure this project appears to have been his most lasting legacy as the Augustan settlement of the east bore a strong resemblance to the logic of client kingship tied to family members that characterised the “Donations of Alexandria”.

74 Pelling 1988, 250.

75 D.E.E. Kleiner and B. Buxton, “Pledges of Empire: The Ara Pacis and the Donations of Rome”, *American Journal of Archaeology* 112, no. 1 (2008): 57–89; Duane W. Roller, *Cleopatra a Biography* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 129; Strootman, “Queen of Kings—Kleopatra VII and the Donations of Alexandria”.

76 Plut. *Brutus*, 53.4; Plut. *Alexander*, 43.5–7.

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The Ambivalent Model: Alexander in the Greek World between Politics and Literature (1st Century BC / beg. 1st Century AD)

Federicomaria Muccioli

No other historical figure has generated as much scholarly heat as Alexander. Needless to say, every historical period builds a personal image of Alexander, useful for propaganda and political purposes. If on the one hand that is obviously true for the *diadochi* and the *epigoni* (*stricto* and *lato sensu*) in their struggle for supremacy,¹ on the other hand the link with Macedon is still perspicuous in the so-called end of Hellenism. The aim of this paper is to investigate the fortune or, more rarely, the misfortune of Alexander from the 1st Century BC till the beginning of the 1st AD in the Greek world under Roman domination. I will face three distinct issues, in some cases linked with each other:

- 1) the popularity of Alexander in the greek *poleis* (included the cults attributed to him).
- 2) Alexander seen as ancestor or model for Graeco-Macedonian or Hellenized dynasties.

¹ See Robert Malcom Errington, "Alexander in the Hellenistic World," in *Alexander le Grand. Image et réalité*, ed. Ernst Badian (Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1976), 137–179; Boris Dreyer, "Jeder hat Alexander-Bild, Das Er Verdient: The Changing Perceptions of Alexander in Ancient Historiography," in *Alexander & his Successors. Essays from the Antipodes*, ed. Pat Wheatley and Robert Hannah (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 2009), 56–71; Andrew Meeus, "Alexander's Image in the Age of the Successors," in *Alexander the Great. A New History*, ed. W. Heckel and Lawrence A. Tritle (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 235–250; Hans-Ulrich Wiemer, "Alexander the Great in the Early Hellenistic Period," in *Antimonarchic Discourse in Antiquity*, ed. Henning Börm (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2015), 85–112; Victor Alonso Troncoso, "Antigonos Monophthalmus and Alexander's Memory," in *Alexander's Legacy*, ed. Cinzia Bearzot and Franca Landucci (Roma: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2016), 97–119. For the iconography of Alexander during Hellenism fundamental is Andrew Stewart, *Faces of Power. Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-Oxford: University of California Press, 1993); see also Anna A. Trofimova, *Imitatio Alexandri in Hellenistic Art* (Roma: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2012).

- 3) Alexander in the Greek literary tradition (rhetorical and historiographical sources, often tied to each other), which sometimes tends to contrast with the official and overarching Roman view.

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The year 324 BC has always been considered crucial for ruler cult. In fact Alexander's request to Greek cities for divine honours in that year has often been considered dogmatic by scholarship, although also questioned and even sometimes considered fictitious. The evidence is only anecdotal and the major sources (Diodorus, Plutarch, Curtius Rufus, Arrian) are quite silent on the matter. Nevertheless one could accept the idea that the Macedonian unofficially 'invited' the *poleis* to attribute divine honours to himself and heroic *timai* to Hephaestion.² A new cultic season was then gradually opened, with civic and dynastic cults assigned to some Hellenistic kings (with some relevant exceptions). The coming of Rome, with the introduction of the cult of *Thea Roma* and thereafter the diffusion of the imperial cult did not delete completely some of the ancient Hellenistic cults. It is well known e.g. that Ptolemy I was still worshipped as a *ktistes* in Ptolemais in the 2nd Century AD or that the Attalids were honoured by Diodoros Paspáros after the creation of the *provincia* of Asia.³ It comes thus as no surprise that Alexander was still worshipped long after his death. Divine or heroic cults (as a founder, *ktistes*, e.g. in Egyptian Alexandria) were widespread over the Greek world. Particularly important are the *Alexandria*, well attested in many Greek cities.⁴

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- 2 See Boris Dreyer, "Heroes, Cults, and Divinity," in *Alexander the Great. A New History*, ed. Waldemar Heckel and Lawrence A. Tritle (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 218–234 (although too optimistic); Federicomaria Muccioli, *Gli epiteti ufficiali dei re ellenistici* (Historia Einzelschriften, 224; Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013), 40–43; lastly, Maxim M. Kholod, "The Cults of Alexander the Great in the Greek Cities of Asia Minor," *Klio* 98 (2016): 495–525.
 - 3 A good overview is in Andrzej Stanisław Chankowski, "Le culte des souverains hellénistiques après la disparition des dynasties: formes de survie et d'extinction d'une institution dans un contexte civique," in *Des Rois au Prince. Pratiques du pouvoir monarchique dans l'Orient hellénistique et romain (1^{re} siècle avant J.-C. – 11^e siècle après J.-C.)*, ed. Ivana Savalli-Lestrade and Isabelle Cogitore (Grenoble: Éditions littéraires et linguistiques de l'Université de Grenoble, 2010), 271–290.
 - 4 See Franca Ferrandini Troisi, "La divinizzazione di Alessandro Magno. Testimonianze epigrafiche," *Epigraphica* 67 (2005): 23–34 (to her list should be added an inscription now in the Archaeological Museum of Split; I owe the information to professor Mario Lombardo).

Among the epigraphical sources, the altar dedicated to Alexander and Olympias by the Iasians and published by G. Maddoli offers a good case.⁵ According to the editor, the most likely dating is the timespan between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD, when the control of Egypt and Asia Minor passed to Octavian after the battle of Actium and Antonius' suicide. If this chronological proposal is correct, then we are allowed to find some particular reason for the introduction of such cult or, at least, for the revival of a previous cult. The point that must be emphasized, in any case, is that Iasos was liberated by Alexander during his campaign, but we miss the connection of the town with his mother Olympias, i.e. the precise link between Macedon, Epirus and Asia Minor. It is tempting to see a close connection between Alexander and Octavian/Augustus.⁶ Nevertheless we should keep in mind that the *imitatio* or better the *aemulatio Alexandri* was a theme valid for the Roman statesman only at the beginning of his career (at least until his arrival in Alexandria in 30 BC). Over time, his propaganda distanced itself from Alexander.⁷ According to Horace, Augustus was different from the Macedonian Conqueror, because he never tried to go further than Hercules or Dionysius.⁸

Be that as it may, many cities during late Hellenism and more and more consistently during the imperial age wanted to link themselves to Alexander or to their Macedonian past.⁹ Some of them minted coins with the image of Alexander on them, in some cases claiming their Macedonian origins (a claim that

5 Gianfranco Maddoli, "Ara in onore di Alessandro ed Olimpiade," *Studi Classici e Orientali* 61, 2 (2015): 137–143.

6 See Anna Maria Biraschi, "Alessandro ed Olimpiade a Iasos. Tradizioni greco-troiane fra Epiro ed Asia Minore da Alessandro ad Augusto," *Studi Classici e Orientali* 61, 2 (2015): 145–161. According to this scholar, Iasos, through this cult, wanted to address to Rome and to the new Alexander (i.e. August) the message of fusion and pacification between East and West, which was originally planned by the Macedonian and symbolized by his maternal genealogy. Anyway, her reconstruction is hardly convincing.

7 On Octavianus/Augustus and his relationship with Alexander a good interpretation is offered by Giovannella Cresci Marrone, "Alessandro fra ideologia e propaganda in età augustea," *Giornale Italiano di Filologia* 9 (1978): 245–259; Giovannella Cresci Marrone, *Ecumene augustea. Una politica per il consenso* (Roma: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1993); Lorenzo Braccisi, *L'Alessandro occidentale. Il Macedone e Roma* (Roma: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2006), esp. 117–142.

8 *Carm.* 3.3.

9 On this subject see Tony Spawforth, "'Macedonian Times': Hellenistic Memories in the Provinces of the Roman Near East," in *Greeks on Greekness. Viewing the Greek Past under the Roman Empire*, ed. David Konstan and Suzanne Saïd (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 2006), 1–26.

may have had little evidence in support thereof). Particularly striking is the case of the cities in Kilikia, Alexandria, Aigai, Epiphania and Hierapolis/Kastabala.¹⁰

In the construction of memory an important role is played by statues of Alexander. E.g., for the inhabitants of the refounded Corinth (under C. Caesar and Augustus) the image of Alexander was keeping its importance.¹¹ In fact Pausanias reports that near the great temple in the Altis at Olympia a statue of the Macedonian was set up by a Corinthian; he was one of the settlers of the new Corinth planted by the Emperor (with some allusion to the refoundation of the *polis*). Alexander was portrayed as Zeus, which means if not divinization, at least a link to the well spread tradition of the filiation of Alexander with that deity.

After the battle of Pharsalos, Caesar visited Ilium, following the steps of Alexander. He bestowed some privileges upon the *polis*, according to Strabo: he allotted territory to the inhabitants, helped them to preserve their freedom and kept them tax free.¹² Thus, Strabo calls him Caesar *Philalexandros*, an epithet which no Hellenistic king would have dared to adopt.¹³ Subsequently, some emperors were attracted by the figure of the Macedonian, but only Caracalla would accrue the unofficial epithet of *Philalexandrotatos*.¹⁴

A different point is made by the fortune of the Alexander's image in Bulgaria, in the first half of the 1st Century BC. In the name of the quaestor Aesillas some tetradrachms were minted with a new-style Alexander on the obverse, while the reverses bear the Roman motifs of chair and chest combined with the club of Heracles. We do not know exactly the ultimate aims of this coinage.¹⁵ Some scholars are inclined to see some political propaganda, i.e. a way to excite the national pride of the Macedonians, but that would have been quite odd after the Macedonian wars, the battle of Pydna and the settling of the *provincia* of

10 They are listed in Karst Dahmen, *The Legend of Alexander the Great on Greek and Roman Coins* (London-New York: Routledge, 2007), 20–24. More generally, on the problem of the historicity of some foundations attributed to Alexander see Peter Marshall Fraser, *Cities of Alexander the Great* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

11 See Paus. 5.25.1 and cp. Spawforth, "Macedonian Times," 25, n. 149.

12 Strabo 13.1.27.

13 Andrew Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome. Local Tradition and Imperial Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 247–250.

14 Dio 78.9.1.

15 See Robert A. Bauslaugh, *Silver Coinage with the Types of Aesillas the Quaestor* (New York: The American Numismatic Society, 2000); Carmen Arnold-Biucchi, *Alexander's Coins and Alexander's Image* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Art Museums, 2006), 71; Dahmen, *The Legend of Alexander the Great*, 18–20.

Macedonia. As Dahmen pointed out, one can suggest rather that this issue with the iconography of Alexander was used as a weapon against the threat from Mithradates VI of Pontus, who was interested in presenting himself as the true heir of Alexander, as we will see.

2

Checking the names of the kings and dynasts in the Hellenistic monarchies up to the 2nd Century BC one notices the absence of the name of Alexander, apart from the son of the Macedonian, Alexander IV. It is true that the son of Seleucus II was originally called Alexander, but he soon changed his name to a more traditional and dynastic Seleucus (III).¹⁶ After this example of failure, the name of Alexander was revived in the kingdom of Syria by Alexander Balas, who claimed to be son of Antiochus IV and by Alexander Zabinas, a supposed adoptive son of Antiochus VII or a supposed son of Alexander Balas.¹⁷

If the name faded away with the last Seleucids and the consolidation of ancient dynastic names (Seleucus, Antiochus) and the introduction of other names expressly linked to Macedonian tradition (Demetrius, Philip), more interesting is the use of Alexander among the Ptolemies between the 2nd and 1st Centuries BC. Ptolemies attempted actually to link themselves to Alexander through many ways (the connection Alexander/Dionysus/Heracles is well known from Ptolemy II onwards: Theocr. *Idyll.* 17 or the great *pompé* described by Kallixeinos of Rhodes), but they never used the name Alexander. With the exception of a son of Ptolemy III and probably Berenice II, the choice of Alexander for Ptolemy X Alexander I and his son Ptolemy XI Alexander II constitutes thus an important change in an otherwise static scenario. Anyway, evidence is lacking to support a true *imitatio* of the Macedonian.¹⁸ On the contrary, Strabo states that a Ptolemy nicknamed *Kokke(s)* and *Pareisaktos* (the

16 Eus. *Chron.* 1.253, ll. 9–11 Schoene (= Porphy. *FGrHist* 260 F 32.9); Sync. *Chron.* 343, ll. 14–15 Mosshammer.

17 Sources and discussion in Claudia Bohm, *Imitatio Alexandri im Hellenismus. Untersuchungen zum politischen Nachwirken Alexanders des Großen in hoch- und späthellenistischen Monarchien*. München: Tuduv, 1989; Daniel Ogden, *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death. The Hellenistic Dynasties* (London: Duckworth with the Classical Press of Galles, 1999), 141–152; Kai Ehling, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der späten Seleukiden (164–63 v.Chr.)* (Historia Einzelschriften, 196; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008), 145–164, 208–214 and *passim*.

18 See Ogden, *Polygamy*, 93–99. Usually in the sources relating to the first king (the reign of the son is very ephemeral) one finds the expression “and called Alexandros”.

real meaning of both these unofficial epithets is rather obscure) plundered the golden sarcophagus of Alexander wherein Ptolemy laid the corpse (this Ptolemy is usually identified as Ptolemy x Alexander I).¹⁹ The name Alexander is recorded later for one of the two twin sons of Cleopatra VII and Marcus Antonius, born in 40 BC (Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene: it is difficult to determine whether Helios and Selene were epithets or proper names). This choice should be seen as a part of the complex propaganda unfurled by Cleopatra: the best interpretation is to be seen on the popularity of Alexander the Great in the fading Hellenistic world as well for Antony's politics.²⁰

Especially in late Hellenistic history, often some illustrious ancestors were forcibly included in the genealogical reconstructions, and in particular Alexander and the Macedonian kings. We may quote, e.g., a Macedonian called Alexander, who grew up and lived in Megalopolis (early 2nd Century BC)²¹ or the Antigonid dynasts Philip V and his son Perseus, who wanted to connect themselves to Philip II and Alexander. Their pretention caused the strong criticism of Polybius, not because he considered it a fictitious genealogy (Antigonids were—wrongly—regarded as an offshoot of the Argeads) but because the Achaean historian criticizes the pretentious and vacuous ambition especially of Philip V, heavily blaming it in his *Histories*.²² In Asiatic dynasties we can see similar patterns, with the inclusion of the Achaemenids in the genealogical trees. In particular, the Ariarathids in Cappadocia claimed to be heirs of the Achaemenids (not of the Macedonians).²³

Mithridates VI of Pontus on the contrary used a multilevel strategy to connect himself with the Conqueror of Asia. In his famous speech to his troops of 88 BC before the struggle against the Romans (which may derive, directly or not, from Metrodorus of Skepsis, a notorious enemy of Rome) he was claiming his descent from the Achaemenids and from Alexander and the Seleucids: to be more precise, he said that he was heir of Darius and Cyrus on his father's

19 17.1.8.

20 Muccioli, *Gli epiteti ufficiali*, 414.

21 Liv. 35.47.5; App. Syr. 13.50; IG 11.4.750. Claiming his descent from Alexander, he named his son Philip and Alexander, and his daughter Apama, who married the king of Athamania, Amyntander (see the suggestions by Tarn in the works quoted *infra*, text and n. 37).

22 Plb. 5.10.10–11; Liv. 27.30.9; 32.22.11; Plut. *Aem.* 12. See Frank W. Walbank, "H ΤΩΝ ΟΛΩΝ ΕΛΠΙΣ and the Antigonids," in Frank W. Walbank, *Polybius, Rome and the Hellenistic World. Essays and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 127–136, esp. 135 (for the quotation); lastly, Nikolaus Overtoom, "Six Polybian Themes Concerning Alexander the Great," *Classical World* 106 (2013): 571–593, esp. 580–582.

23 D.S. 31.19.

side, and Alexander the Great and Seleukos Nikator on his mother's side.²⁴ The tie with the Achamenids is not to be seen as completely speculative and it is recorded widely in the literary tradition,²⁵ whereas the maternal ancestors are, if not fictitious, rather dubious. Apart from this speech, there is a list of episodes which suggest the continuous attempts of Mithridates to link himself to Alexander.²⁶

It is remarkable that no one of these ancestors is included amongst the portraits in the Delos monument of Mithridates.²⁷ In that case the king included only Ariarathes of Kappadokia, his nephew, and the Seleucid Antiochos Epiphanes. As far as we know, the link to Alexander was echoed by some portrait types of the pontic dynast. Already before the first struggle against Rome, Mithridates was being depicted with the *anastole* hairstyle, which is a clear imitation of Alexander (a *typus* uncommon in Hellenistic times, attested earlier only by Diodotos Tryphon, a Seleucid usurper).²⁸ As widely recognized, in his coins and his titulature, Mithridates used many political and religious vectors, addressed to both the Iranian (and Anatolic) side, like the Pegasos, and

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- 24 Iust. 38.3.11–7.10, esp. 7.1. On this passage of speech full commentary in Luis Ballesteros Pastor, *Pompeyo Trogo, Justino y Mitridates. Comentario al Epítome de las Historias Filípicas* (37.1.6–38.8.1) (Hildesheim-Zürich-New York: Olms, 2013), 273–283.
 - 25 Plb. 5.43.2; Sall. *Hist.* 2 fr. 73 Maurenbrecher; Tac. *Ann.* 12.18; Flor. 1.40.1; App. *Mithr.* 9.27–29; 112.540. On the origins of the Pontic house see the reconstruction offered by Albert Brian Bosworth and Pat V. Wheatley, “The Origins of the Pontic House,” *Journal of Hellenistic Studies* 118 (1998): 155–164 (although in some points conjectural).
 - 26 App. *Mithr.* 20.76 (stay for a night in a Phrygian inn visited by Alexander), 117.577 (possession of Alexander's purple cloak); Strabo 14.1.23 (donation to the temple of Artemis in Ephesos).
 - 27 As remarked by Patric-Alexander Kreuz, “Monuments for the King: Royal Presence in the Late Hellenistic World of Mithridates VI,” in *Mithridates VI and the Pontic Kingdom*, ed. Jakob Munk Højte (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2009), 131–144, esp. 138.
 - 28 About the *imitatio Alexandri* by Mithridates VI see Robert Fleischer, “True Ancestors and False Ancestors in Hellenistic Rulers' Portraiture,” in *Images of Ancestors*, ed. Jakob Munk Højte (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2002), 59–74; Jakob Munk Højte, “Portraits and Statues of Mithridates VI,” in *Mithridates VI and the Pontic Kingdom*, ed. by Jakob Munk Højte (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press), 145–162; Deniz Burcu Erciyas, *Wealth, Aristocracy and Royal Propaganda under the Hellenistic Kingdom of the Mithradatis in the Central Black Sea Region of Turkey* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2006), 129–134; Claire Barat, “Représentations de la dynastie du Pont: images et discours,” in *La puissance royale. Image et pouvoir de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge*, ed. Emmanuelle Santinelli-Foltz and Christian-Georges Scholtz (Rennes: PUR, 2012), 45–61, esp. 53–54; Agnieszka Fulińska, “The Elusive King. In Search of the Portraits of Mithridates VI Eupator,” *Classica Cracoviensia* 15 (2012), 59–79.

the Greeks, in some cases valid for both (Dionysus, King of Kings, in particular). The connection with Dionysus reminds one clearly of the connection of Alexander with that divinity.²⁹

In reminding his people of Alexander, Mithridates' goal was not simply a pale revival of the *imitatio Alexandri*, following the steps of other Hellenistic dynasties. He rather presented himself as the new king of Asia (after Alexander and the Seleucids) ready to conquer the world, as suggested by his speech but also by the oracular tradition, or at least he wanted to present himself as the king of the East struggling against western peoples.³⁰ In his view the new barbarians were the Romans and his audience were not only his mercenaries troops but in particular all the Greek cities, where the memory of Alexander was still alive.

In the small kingdom of Commagene, Antiochos I (c. 69–36 BC) in his *hierothesion* at the Nemrud Dagħ was proud to show to the world his double roots (“the two very fortunate roots of my ancestry”),³¹ tracing his paternal *progonoi* back to the Achaemenid kings and, on the other side, the maternal ones to the Macedonians.³² The paternal ancestors begin with Darius I and end with

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- 29 See Luis Ballesteros Pastor, *Mitridates Eupátor, rey del Ponto* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1996), 402–404; Luis Ballesteros Pastor, “Mithridates, God-King? Iranian Kingship in a Greek Context,” in *Divinizzazione, culto del sovrano e apoteosi. Tra Antichità e Medioevo*, ed. Tommaso Gnoli and Federicomaria Muccioli (Bologna: Bononia University Press 2014), 179–192.
- 30 Sources and discussion in Federicomaria Muccioli, “Il Re dell’Asia: ideologia e propaganda da Alessandro Magno a Mitridate VI,” *Simblos* 4 (2004): 105–158, esp. 151–158; Luis Ballesteros Pastor, “*Xerxes redivivus*: Mitridates, rey de Oriente frente a Grecia,” in *Grecia Ante Los Imperios*, ed. Juan Manuel Cortés Copete et al. (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2011), 253–262.
- 31 *Nomos* inscription, ll. 30–32 (cp. ll. 47–48). Text in Friedrich Karl Dörner, in *Nemrud Dağı*, I, ed. Donald H. Sanders (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 206–213.
- 32 Some doubts remain over the whole genealogic reconstruction. See Thomas Fischer, “Zum Kult des Antiochos I. von Kommagene für seine seleukidischen Ahnen,” *Istanbuler Mitteilungen / Deutsches Archäologisches Institut* 22 (1972), 141–144; Bruno Jacobs, “Die Galerien der Ahnen des Königs Antiochos I. von Kommagene auf dem Nemrud Dağı,” in *Images of Ancestors*, ed. Jakob Munk Højte (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press 2002), 75–88; Margherita Facella, *La dinastia degli Orontidi nella Commagene ellenistico-romana* (Pisa: Giardini, 2006), 95–297; Margherita Facella, “Darius and the Achaemenids in Commagene,” in *Organisation des pouvoirs et contacts culturels dans les pays de l’empire achéménide*, ed. Pierre Briant and Michel Chauveau (Paris: De Boccard, 2009), 379–414; Rolf Strootman, “The Heroic Company of my Forebears: The Ancestor Galleries of Antiochos I of Kommagene at Nemrut Dağı and the Role of Royal Women in the Transmission of Hellenistic Kingship,” in *Seleukid Royal Women. Creation, Representation and Distor-*

Mithradates I, father of Antiochos. Among the maternal ancestors Alexander is obviously the first *progonos*, playing an important role in the *hierothesion*. At least two reliefs on *stelae* of the Macedonian king were displaced. Unfortunately there remains only a fragment of the relief of the West Terrace (not that of the East Terrace), but we are allowed to retrace a maternal succession: from Alexander to Seleucos I, Antiochos I, Antiochos II and so on, down to Antiochos VIII, grandfather of the king and Laodike Thea Philadelphos, wife of Mithradates I and mother of Antiochos I of Commagene. What seems more surprising in this menagerie of evidence is that the reconstruction of the dedication inscription allows one to read that Alexander was depicted as *Megas* in the Kingdom of Cappadocia.³³ Nevertheless, the link to the Macedonian should not to be overestimated, for Antiochos usually in his inscriptions refers only to his Seleucid roots, claiming his descendance from Antiochos VIII, through his mother Laodike Thea Philadelphos. In any case, the double ancestry, from Persia and Macedonia, is not only a more or less fictional claim, useful for political propaganda, but it was linked to the ambitious syncretistic program of Antiochos, who wanted to create a new form of cult (explicitly stated by the Zeus-Oromasdes, Apollo-Mithra-Helios-Hermes, Artagnes-Heracles-Ares and, in addition, the personification of the land of Commagene).

We know that the son, Mithradates II, gave up this ambitious project and the Nemrud Dagħ *hierothesion* was abandoned or, at least, did not constitute anymore the main branch of the dynasty. As far as we can know, later descendants too did not dare to link themselves to Alexander, although they extolled the Macedonian side of their genealogy.³⁴ Thus, in the monument of Antiochos Philopappos, friend of Plutarch and nephew of Antiochos IV of Commagene (the last dynast of the kingdom), on the hill of the Museion in Athens, there was space only for a statue of Seleucus I; we may add that the sister of Philopappos, Iulia Balbilla, close friend of Vibia Sabina, wife of Hadrian, referred magnificently to his ancestors (but not explicitly to Alexander).³⁵

What is therefore the rationale for a connection between Alexander-Seleucids-Pontic kings/Commagenian kings? Obviously, the marriage links between

tion of Hellenistic Queenship in the Seleukid Empire, ed. Altay Coşkun and Alex McAuley (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016), 209–229.

33 Friedrich Karl Dörner, in *Nemrud Dağı*, I, 322–326, 371, 376.

34 Cp. Jos. B.J. 5.460 (about the men around Antiochus IV, called Macedons and instructed and armed after the Macedonian manner).

35 Sources and discussion in Facella, *La dinastia degli Orontidi*, 338–358; Ilaria Romeo, “La memoria dei re. Ascendenze dinastiche nei monumenti figurati dell’Asia Minore Romana,” *Scienze dell’Antichità. Storia Archeologia Antropologia* 16 (2010): 137–162, esp. 146–148.

such royal families strongly imply their roots in the Seleucid field, if not explicitly expressed in their official propaganda.³⁶ The main problem is discerning when and under which circumstances they needed to underline such ties. Long ago, some scholars suggested the creation of a fictitious link between Alexander and Seleucos I. According to Tarn, Apama, the Iranian first wife of Seleucus, could have been the daughter of Alexander or could have been thought to be.³⁷ On the other side, Rostovtzeff thought that Seleucus I wanted to create a relationship between Seleucids and Temenids, on the basis of a rather obscure and cursory passage of Libanius concerning the foundation of Antioch on the Orontes.³⁸ In any case, in an inscription from Xanthos in Licia (end of 3rd Century BC), the Ptolemies and the Seleucids (in particular, Ptolemy IV and Antiochus III) are both called *Heraclidai* (ll. 47–48, 75–76, 105, 109–110): it is probably a form of *captatio benevolentiae* but which may well echo some elements of royal propaganda (more easily recognizable in Lagid propaganda).³⁹ Be that as it may, the link of the Seleucids with the Argeads' dynasty, and with Alexander in particular seems a minor theme in their propaganda, focused mainly on tales pertaining to the birth of Seleucus I.⁴⁰

Such ties were not uncommon in the Hellenistic world, not to mention Telephus, son of Heracles, the 'founder' of Attalid house⁴¹ or the supposed

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- 36 I already quoted the marriage between Mithridates I of Commagene and Laodice. The connection between Seleucids and ancestors of Mithridates VI started at least with Mithridates II, who married Seleucus II's sister and gave his daughter as wife to Antiochus III (Plb. 5.42).
- 37 William Woodthorpe Tarn, "Queen Ptolemais and Apama," *Classical Quarterly* 23 (1929): 138–141; William Woodthorpe Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1951; second edition), 446–451.
- 38 Or. 11.91. See Michael Rostovtzeff, "Progonoi," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 55 (1935): 55–66, esp. 63–66.
- 39 Text and commentary in Jean Bousquet, "La stèle des Kyténiens à Xanthos de Lycie," *Revue des Études Grecques* 101 (1988): 12–53.
- 40 Iust. 15.4.2–9; App. Syr. 56.284–287. See Muccioli, *Gli epiteli ufficiali*, 94–101 (with more evidence) and, lastly, Daniel Ogden, "Seleucus, his Signet Ring and his Diadem," in *Alexander's Legacy*, ed. Cinzia Bearzot and F. Landucci (Roma: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2016), 141–155; Daniel Ogden, *The Legend of Seleucus. Kingship, Narrative and Mythmaking in the Ancient World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- 41 See also the case of Heracles, the illegitimate son of Alexander (and Barsine), who lived for a while in Pergamum (D.S. 20.20.1) and the possible connecting of the Attalids with him. I avoid to discuss the *Alexandra* of Lycophron (esp. ll. 1435–1450) and its supposed place in attalid propaganda.

filiation of Ptolemy from Philip (originated, according to scholarship, by the propaganda of Ptolemy II or Ptolemy Ceraunus, if not from the inventive pen of some late historians, such as Timagenes of Alexandria in the 1st Century BC).⁴² There was, for example, the commemorative series called pedigree coins of the Indo-Greek king Agathocles in the first half of the 2nd Century BC. Some tetradrachms bear the legend Alexander (son) of Philip (but they mention also a Seleucid Antiochos, called Nikator, and Diodotus and Euthydemos).⁴³

In the wider context of the intermarriages in the Eastern dynasties during the Augustan age, the daughter of Archelaus of Cappadocia, Glaphyra, became the wife of Alexander, son of Herod (18 or 17 BC). Relationships at court were troubling and Glaphyra (and Alexander) had many enemies in the court, especially Antipater. In Josephus's words, she "augmented this hatred against them, by deriving her nobility and genealogy [from great persons], and pretending that she was a lady superior to all others in that kingdom, as being derived by her father's side from Temenus, and by her mother's side from Darius, the son of Hystaspes". Glaphyra was so proud of her origin that she often reproached Herod's sister and many wives with the ignobility of their descent. According to this princess, they were chosen by him for their beauty, but not for their family. The consequence was that they all hated Alexander, because of Glaphyra's boasting and reproaches.⁴⁴ Archelaus thus was stemming from a Macedonian (?) family in the Pontus, with some ties (fictitious or not) with the Pontic house and, above all, Mithridates VI, whereas his unknown mother was probably an Armenian princess. It is conceivable that Glaphyra echoed some propagandistic themes already being used by the Pontic king.⁴⁵

42 Timagenes's hypothesis: Branko van Oppen, "Lagus and Arsinoe: An Exploration of Legendary Royal Bastardy," *Historia* 62 (2013): 80–107; cp. Nina L. Collins, "The Various Fathers of Ptolemy I," *Mnemosyne* s. IV, 50 (1997), 436–476 (tales originated with Ptolemy Ceraunus); Daniel Ogden, "The Birth Myths of Ptolemy Soter," in *Belonging and Isolation in the Hellenistic World*, ed. Sheila L. Ager and Riemer A. Faber (Toronto-Buffalo-London: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 184–198.

43 See Frank Holt, "The So-Called 'Pedigree Coins' of the Bactrian Greeks," in *Ancient Coins of the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. Waldemar Heckel and Richard Sullivan (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfried Laurier University Press for the Calgary Institute for the Humanities, 1984), 69–91, esp. 70–74; Oswin Bopearachchi, *Monnaies gréco-bactriennes et indo-grecques. Catalogue raisonné* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1991), 60–61, 177 no. 12; Omar Coloru, *Da Alessandro Magno a Menandro. Il regno greco di Battriana* (Pisa-Roma: Serra Editore, 2009), 200–203; Muccioli, *Gli epiteti ufficiali*, 340 (with other references).

44 Jos. B.J. 1.476–477 (quote from W. Whiston's translation).

45 See Federicomaria Muccioli, "Philopatris e il concetto di patria in età ellenistica," in *Studi Ellenistici*, 19, ed. Biagio Virgilio (Pisa: Giardini editori e stampatori, 2006), 365–398.

The connection with Alexander and the Persians may suggest another and even more problematic link: the Parthian heirs of the Achaemenids and of Alexander, as stated by Tacitus.⁴⁶ In fact the Arsacid king Artabanus II, after conquering Armenia (ca. 34 AC), let his embassy say to Tiberius, already old and weak, that he wanted back the treasury of Vonones, left in Cilicia and Syria, and that he was ready to invade those lands. The ground for this claim was that those territories were long ago borders of the Achaemenid and Macedonian empires, and the Parthian king linked himself to their ancient owners, Cyrus and Alexander. This claim is classified as *vaniloquentia* and *minae* by Tacitus and it remains doubtful whether the Parthians really wanted to create a link with the Macedonian king (whereas it is by far more plausible the link with their Iranian roots) or whether they simply wanted to blackmail the Romans.⁴⁷

3

Alexander is the most inexhaustible of all topics for rhetoric, poetry and historiography, from 4th Century onwards, including the 1st Century BC and the early Imperial age.⁴⁸ We do not know any chronological era starting with the battle of Gaugamela in 331 BC or with some other significant events linked to the Macedonian apart, obviously, from his demise and that was a later consider-

46 *Ann.* 6.31.1.

47 On the revival of Achaemenid ideology under the Parthians see, recently, M. Rahim Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians. Political Ideology in Post-Hellenistic and Late Antique Persia* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), 41 ff.; M. Rahim Shayegan, "The Arsacids and Commagene," in *The Parthian and Early Sasanian Empires. Adaptation and Expansion*, ed. Vesta Sarkosh Curtis, Elizabeth Pendleton, Michael Alram and Touraj Daryaee (Oxford-Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2016), 8–22. About Arsacids and Alexander see Marek J. Olbrycht, "The Political-Military Strategy of Artabanos/Ardawān II in AD 34–37," *Anabasis* 3 (2012), 215–237, esp. 217–218, who underlines the popularity of the Macedonian already since the times of the satrap Atropates in the Media Atropatene, a land which Artabanus ruled before becoming king of Parthia.

48 A recent survey is in Luisa Prandi, *Corpus dei papiri storici greci e latini. Parte A—Storici greci. 2. Testi storici anepigrafi*, 9, *I papiri e le storie di Alessandro Magno* (Pisa-Roma: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2010); Silvia Barbantani, "Alexander's Presence (and Absence) in Hellenistic Poetry," in *Alexander's Legacy*, ed. Cinzia Bearzot and Franca Landucci (Roma: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2016), 1–24. More generally, although outdated in some respects, see Werner Hoffmann, *Das literarische Porträt Alexanders des Großen im griechischen und römischen Altertum* (Leipzig: Verlag von Quelle & Meyer, 1907).

ation.⁴⁹ In this respect, Alexander became a marker of time or was considered an important turning point only late in Greek historiography. In fact, if important works such those of Duris (*Makedonika*) and of Hieronymus of Cardia had their end with the deeds of the *epigonoï*, Diodorus devoted to the Macedonian a whole book in his huge project of world history (*Bibliotheca Historica*).⁵⁰ The Sicilian writer follows Cleitarchus and the so called *vulgata*, but it would be incorrect to reduce his whole narrative to that tradition.⁵¹ He explicitly underlines the greatness of the king, with an affirmation probably not well echoed by some Roman audiences. In fact he writes that Alexander “accomplished greater deeds than any, not only of the kings who had lived before him but also of those who were to come later down to our time”.⁵² Such words probably were not well accepted by Roman generals, who wanted to link themselves explicitly to the son of Philip, establishing an *imitatio* if not, more properly, an *aemulatio* (Pompey and Caesar above all).⁵³

The greatness of Alexander, so stressed by Diodorus, is somehow paralleled by other Greek sources. In particular, Strabo is very skeptical about the trustiness of the flattering historiography on Alexander, but he is ready to recognize that the Macedonian and Augustus were the most eminent personalities of the Greek-Roman *oikoumene* (Pompeius Trogus too adopted a similar view). He described the deeds of the Macedonian king in some books, as he explains in

49 See the interesting remarks of Luisa Prandi, “Riflessi microasiatici della spedizione di Alessandro il Grande. Elementi di periodizzazione nel iv secolo a.C.,” in *Culture egemoniche e culture locali nel Mediterraneo antico*, ed. Luisa Prandi (Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso), 9–33; Alexander’s conquest of Asia Minor was not seen as such an epochal event by his contemporaries in Asia Minor.

50 See Dino Ambaglio, “Il tempo di Alessandro Magno,” *Rivista Storica Italiana* 114 (2002): 726–737; Dino Ambaglio, “Diodoro e i tempi della Macedonia,” in *Diodoro e l’altra Grecia. Macedonia, Occidente, Ellenismo nella Biblioteca storica*, ed. Cinzia Bearzot and Franca Landucci (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2005), 357–368. Cp. the remarks by John E. Atkinson, “Originality and its Limits in the Alexander Sources of the Early Empire,” in *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction*, ed. Albert Brian Bosworth and Elizabeth J. Baynham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 307–325, esp. 311–314.

51 A good *status quaestionis* is in Luisa Prandi, *Diodoro Siculo. Biblioteca storica. Libro XVII. Commento storico* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2013).

52 17.117.5; cp. 17.1.3.

53 This aspect is investigated by Peter Green, “Caesar and Alexander: Aemulatio, Imitatio, Comparatio,” *American Journal of Ancient History* 3 (1978): 1–26. More generally, see Angela Kühnen, *Die imitatio Alexandri in der römischen Politik* (1. Jh. v. Chr. – 3. Jh. n. Chr.) (Münster: Rhema Verlag, 2008).

his *Geography*.⁵⁴ Much has been said about the place of Alexander in Strabo's historical work(s). An original but very speculative solution was offered by Daniela Dueck: according to this scholar Strabo wrote a treatise continuing Polybius (in forty-three books), whereas the deeds of Alexander were properly included in a second work (called *Historika Hypomnemata*).⁵⁵ Anyway, although many scholars believe that the deeds of Alexander the Great were described in a separate work,⁵⁶ the most likely explanation is that they formed an important and preliminary part of the *Historika Hypomnemata*.⁵⁷

This erudite literature emphasizes the conquests of Alexander.⁵⁸ Thus an Archelaus (to be identified with the king Archelaus of Cappadocia) was a *chorographos* who wrote a work on the travels of Alexander. The identification with the dynast is discussed but an argument may be that Archelaos (and his daughter Glaphyra, as we have seen above) were proud of their (supposed) Temenid roots.⁵⁹

On the other side, in the 1st Century BC other voices were more skeptical about the extent of the eastern conquests of Alexander. Apollodorus of Artemita, a Greek town in Mesopotamia under the Parthian rule, was active probably in the first half of the 1st Century BC. He wrote a work called *Parthika*, which represents the official voice of Parthian propaganda according to some scholars. More prudently, we can safely affirm that he offers a different perspective of the *Weltsgeschichte*, giving room to kingdoms usually neglected or

54 2.1.9 (= Strabo *FGrHist/BNJ* 91 F 3). On Alexander in Strabo's *Geography* see Bernadette Tisé, "Strabone, l'ecumene romana e la monarchia macedone," in *Studi sull'XI libro dei Geographika di Strabone*, ed. Giusto Traina (Galatina: Congedo Editore, 2001), 127–140, esp. 131–140.

55 Daniela Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia. A Greek Man of Letters in Augustan Rome* (London-New York: Routledge), 69–70.

56 See Paul Pédech, "Strabon historien d'Alexandre," *Gräzer Beiträge* 2 (1974): 129–145; Johannes Engels, "Die Geschichte des Alexanderzuges und das Bild Alexanders des Großen in Strabons *Geographika*—Zur Interpretation der augusteischen Kulturgeographie Strabons als Quelle seiner historischen Auffassungen," in *Alexander der Große. Eine Welteneroberung und ihr Hintergrund*, ed. Wolfgang Will (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1998), 131–171; Duane W. Roller, "Strabo of Amaseia (91)," in *BNJ*, 2008, //referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-jacoby/strabo-of-amaseia-91-91?s.num=16/, comm. ad F 3.

57 E.g., Hugh Lindsay, "Strabo and the Shape of his *Historika Hypomnemata*," *The Ancient History Bulletin* 28 (2014): 1–19.

58 Serena Bianchetti, "La concezione dell'ecumene di Alessandro in Diodoro XVII–XVIII," in *Diodoro e l'altra Grecia. Macedonia, Occidente, Ellenismo nella Biblioteca storica*, ed. Cinzia Bearzot and Franca Landucci (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2005), 127–153.

59 Diog. Laert. 2.17 (= Archel. *FGrHist/BNJ* 123 T 1).

misunderstood by other Greek authors. He was a possible source already for Posidonius and surely for Strabo, who admits his importance for geographical knowledge by saying that he gave more precise informations about Hyrcania and Bactriana than many other writers did. In particular, Apollodorus, showing the 'dark' side of Hellenistic *oikoumene*, could claim that some Indo-Greeks (and before them) Graeco-Bactrian kings, such as Menander and Demetrios son of Euthydemus, "subjugated more people than Alexander did".⁶⁰ The comparison may be seen only superficially as odd, but in this case the *imitatio Alexandri* constitutes rather an *aemulatio Alexandri*, probably in fact and not only in Apollodorus' view.

Works on Alexander in the 1st century BC had little success in the tradition, as far as we know. The versatile writer and *makrobios* Potamon of Mytilene (active at least from 48 BC down to the principate of Tiberius) achieved great literary renown. He wrote a work (an historical one? a rhetorical piece?) about the son of Philip. We know it only from the quotation of Plutarch in the *Life of Alexander*, taken from Sotion: Potamon detailed a city founded by Alexander and named after his dog Peritas.⁶¹ We ignore the specific reason which led the Lesbian author to write such work.⁶² Nevertheless, it is tempting to see a link with some previous literary productions from other writers from Mytilene, or

60 Strabo 2.5.12; 11.11.1; 15.1.3 (= Apollod. *FGrHist*/BNJ 779 FF 3a, 7a, 7b; cp. FF 3b, 3c). About Apollodorus and his influence on the tradition, from Posidonius down to Pompeius Trogus/Justinus, see Federicomaria Muccioli, "La rappresentazione dei Parti nelle fonti tra II e I secolo a.C. e la polemica di Livio contro i *levissimi ex Graecis*," in *Incontri tra culture nell'Oriente ellenistico e romano*, ed. Tommaso Gnoli and Federicomaria Muccioli (Milano: Mimesis, 2007), 87–115, esp. 92–98; Federicomaria Muccioli, "I Parti (e le regalità greco-battiane e indo-greche) in Pompeo Trogo/Giustino, tra etnografia e storiografia," in *Studi sull'Epitome di Giustino. III. Il tardo Ellenismo. I Parti e i Romani*, ed. Alessandro Galimberti and Giuseppe Zecchini (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2016): 117–147, esp. 118–120, 130–136.

61 Plut. *Alex.* 61.3 (= Potamo *FGrHist* 147/1085 F1/T 4a). The tale is to found already in Theop. *FGrHist*/BNJ 115 F 340.

62 *Suda* Ποτάμων, Μιτυληναῖος (= Potamo *FGrHist* 147/1085 T1/T1a). According to Ewen Bowie, "Men from Mytilene," in *The Struggle for Identity. Greeks and their Past in the First Century BCE*, ed. Thomas A. Schmitz and Nicolas Wiaters (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011), 181–195, esp. 183–185, the quote in the *Life of Alexander* comes from the declamatory career of Potamon; however, this scholar does not rule out that Potamon wrote an historical work on Alexander; similarly, already Willy Stegemann, *Potamon*, 3 (*RE* 22, 1, 1953), col. 1023–1027, esp. 1026–1027. More prudence in the commentary of Jan Radicke, *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker Continued*, IVA: *Biography*, fasc. 7, *Imperial and Undated Authors* (Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 1999), 287, n. 9.

even a polemical hint against them (in particular, Theophanes). In fact, according to the *Suda*, Potamon wrote also an encomium of Brutus and one of Caesar, written probably after Pharsalus whereas Theophanes, intimate of Pompey, underlined the *Alexandri imitatio* by his Roman patron.⁶³ Then, the Hellenized Egyptian scholar, Apion of Alexandria (30–20 BC–c. 45–48 AD), wrote *laudes* of Alexander the Great, of which very little is known.⁶⁴

In any case, Alexander was in the 1st Century BC—beginning of 1st Century AD (and even later) a topic to handle with care. Roman sources offer an ambivalent picture of the Macedonian, without sparing criticism for his behaviour, degeneration and barbarian customs.⁶⁵ This view is opposite to that held by the Hellenistic tradition (according to Ptolemaic propaganda Alexander was the “the god of the dancing diadem, who brought destruction to the Persians”).⁶⁶ Moreover, Plutarch in *De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute* idealizes the figure of Alexander, depicted as a “philosopher in arms”, an image which goes back to Onesicritus (and Eratosthenes) but which apparently found no room in Greek and Roman literature.

Well before the violent attacks of Seneca or Lucanus, already Cicero had criticized the son of Philip II. True, on one side he was aware of some *elogia* of important Greek statesmen (among them he listed Alexander).⁶⁷ But on the other side he considered the Macedonian inferior to them (just as other

63 See Radicke, *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker Continued*, 287. On the appreciation of Alexander in Theophanes (in the wider context of the *imitatio* of the Macedonian by Pompey), see Federico Santangelo, *Teofane di Mitilene. Testimonianze e frammenti* (Tivoli, Tored, 2015), 13, 41, 112–115.

64 Gell. *N.A.* 7.8.2 (= Apion *FGrHist/BNJ* 616 F 22). It is debated whether he wrote such praises in a specific work or in his *Egyptian Matters*.

65 For a general overview see Petre Ceaușescu, “La double image d’Alexandre à Rome,” *Studii Clasice* 16 (1974): 153–168; Diana Spencer, *The Roman Alexander. Reading a Cultural Myth* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002); Jane Bellemore, “Valerius Maximus and his Presentation of Alexander the Great,” in *East and West in the World Empire of Alexander. Essays in Honour of Brian Bosworth*, ed. Pat Wheatley and Elizabeth Baynham (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 299–316.

66 Theocr. *Idyll.* 17, ll. 18–19. See André R. Looijenga, “The Spear and the Ideology of Kingship in Hellenistic Poetry,” in *Hellenistic Poetry in Context*, ed. M. Annette Harder et al. (Leuven–Paris–Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2014), 217–245, esp. 218–229; Barbantani, “Alexander’s Presence,” 7–14.

67 See Giuseppe Nenci, “L’imitatio Alexandri,” *Polis* 4 (1992): 173–186, esp. 183, who quotes Cic. *De or.* 2.341; *De fin.* 2.116 and [Cic.] *Rhet. ad Her.* 4.31, following Eduard Norden, “Ein Panegyricus auf Augustus in Vergils Aeneis,” *Rheinisches Museum* n.F. 54 (1899): 466–482, esp. 468–469.

Roman authors did). Some Latin sources present in fact Philip as the good paradigm, often opposed to the degenerate son (besides Cicero, in particular Seneca).⁶⁸ This was not necessarily a new tack on the Conqueror. It has often been said that already some Stoics (and Cynics) had been hostile to Alexander. Particularly relevant is the criticism expressed by Panaetius, which was very influential on Cicero's judgement of Alexander.⁶⁹

Among the Greek authors interested in Alexander the most important, but even the most elusive is Timagenes of Alexandria, *rhetor* and historian (author of many books according to the *Suda*), who came to Rome as a prisoner in 55 BC.⁷⁰ According to Quintilianus, this writer was the true and praised heir of Cleitarchus, the only one who restored the long-lost tradition of writing history with new glory. He included the eastern campaign of Alexander probably in his *On the kings*, rearranging Cleitarchus's narrative, who, during the Hellenistic age, was the most popular writer on Alexander.⁷¹ Cleitarchus (4th–3rd Century BC) offered a rhetorical account of the expedition of Alexander, full of fictional tales. Although some in antiquity regarded his work as imaginative, it

68 See Agnès Molinier, "Philippe le bon roi de Cicéron à Sénèque," *Revue des Études Latines* 73 (1995): 60–79; Sulochana R. Asirvatham, "His Son's Father? Philip in the Second Sophistic," in *Philip 11 and Alexander the Great. Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*, ed. Elizabeth Carney and Daniel Ogden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 193–204, 294–299.

69 Despite Cic. *De off.* 2.16 (from Panaetius), a *locus* valorized by J. Rufus Fears, "The Stoic View of the Career and Character of Alexander the Great," *Philologus* 118 (1974): 113–130, followed by Richard Stoneman, "The Legacy of Alexander in Ancient Philosophy," in *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great*, ed. Joseph Roisman (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2003), 325–345, esp. 336, scholarship denies that Panaetius had a positive evaluation on Alexander. See Grilli, "Alessandro e Filippo,"; Jean-Louis Ferrary, *Philhellénisme et impérialisme. Aspects idéologiques de la conquête romaine du monde hellénistique. De la seconde guerre de Macédoine à la guerre contre Mithridate* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1988), 419–421 with n. 92; Molinier, "Philippe le bon roi de Cicéron à Sénèque," 62–64; Elias Koulakiotis, *Genese und Metamorphosen des Alexandermythos im Spiegel der griechischen nichthistoriographischen Überlieferung bis zum 3. Jh. n. Chr.* (Konstanz: UVK, 2006), 106–112.

70 *Suda* s.v. Τιμαγόνης (= Timag. *FGrHist/BNJ* 88 T 1). For a reassessment of this figure see Federicomaria Muccioli, "Letterati greci a Roma nel I secolo a.C. Elementi per una riconsiderazione di Alessandro Poliistore e Timagene," in *Stranieri a Roma*, ed. Stefano Conti and Barbara Scardigli (Ancona: Affinità Elettive, 2009), 59–84; Federicomaria Muccioli, "Timagene, un erudito tra Alessandria e Roma. Nuove riflessioni," in *Tradizione e trasmissione degli storici greci frammentari. 11*, ed. Virgilio Costa (Tivoli: Tored, 2012), 365–388.

71 Timag. *FGrHist/BNJ* 88 T 6, F 3 and probably also F 12 (the quote from Quint. *I. O.* 10.1.75 is T 6).

formed the basis of the so-called Vulgate tradition (as stated by the accounts of Diodorus Siculus, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Pompeius Trogus/Justinus, and the Metz *Epitome*).

As far as we can discern, Cleitarchus, followed by Timagenes, manipulated an important accident in the lifetime of Alexander, the battle against the Malli in India (326/325 BC), when the Macedonian was about to die. According to this invented tradition, the people against whom Alexander fought were the Malli and the son of Philip was saved by Ptolemy, not by other friends (in particular, Peucestas).⁷² There was good reason to reinforce the link between the Lagids and the Argeads, although we cannot say with certainty that Cleitarchus was an official supporter of the Ptolemies, in particular Ptolemy II. Be that as it may, Timagenes may well have added the epithet Soter for Ptolemy I, originating from his (supposed) rescue of Alexander.⁷³

Timagenes was both a famous *rhetor* and a historian and we are allowed to think that he celebrated the deeds of Alexander by using also some themes typical of the oratory schools (rhetoric had always much to say about the Macedonian, as attested, e.g., by Seneca the Elder and his *Suasoriae*). One of the most widespread topics in rhetorical (and philosophical) exercises was represented by the roles of virtue, fortune and misfortune in Alexander's life, compared with their impact on Rome.

Probably for some Greek authors Alexander was a supranational hero, a champion of Greekness. Obviously this theme could stir controversies or animosity against Rome, balanced by the vigorous attacks in Roman literature. A good example of counterfactual history is reported in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, without any sign of polemic hint. The text runs as follows: "Alexander of Macedon with consummate toil from boyhood trained his mind to virtue. Alexander's virtues have been broadcast with fame and glory throughout the world. All men greatly feared Alexander, yet deeply loved him. Had longer life been granted Alexander, the Macedonian lances would have flown across the ocean."⁷⁴ Behind these words there is a rhetorical tradition which could have links with the historiographical and biographical sources. Not by chance indeed does Diodorus seem to echo this theme by reporting the last plans of

72 Curt. 9.5.21 (= Ptol. *FGrHist* 138 F 26b = Clitarch. *FGrHist*/BNJ 137 F 24 = Timag. *FGrHist*/BNJ 88 F 3; cp. Arr. *Anab.* 6.11.7–8 = Ptol. *FGrHist* 138 F 26a).

73 The link is explicitly stated in Arr. *Anab.* 6.11.8 (without mention of the source). Cp. Steph. Byz. s.v. Ὀξυδράχαι. Full discussion in Federicomaria Muccioli, "Lo scontro di Alessandro con i Malli in Plutarco. Realtà storica e deformazione," in *Plutarque et la guerre*, in press.

74 [Cic.] *Rhet. ad Her.* 4.31 (transl. Harry Caplan).

Alexander in book XVIII of his *Bibliotheca Historica*. His western projects are clearly a late fictive narrative, which even Arrian knew but without putting too much emphasis on it.⁷⁵

More or less the same *topos* can be traced in a fictional epistle by Alexander the Great to the Romans, reported only by Memnon of Heracleia Pontica (his dating is under discussion: I–II CE according to most, although the 1st Century BC is not completely to be dismissed). He writes that the Romans, “when Alexander was crossing to Asia and had written to them saying that they would either prevail, if they were capable of ruling, or would submit to stronger forces, despatched to him a golden crown weighing a considerable number of talents.”⁷⁶ Although the historian makes critical remarks on Roman personalities and politics, it is not easy to see in this episode a true attack on Roman world power and to detect in Memnon’s work a significant conflict between local patriotism (and/or anti-Roman bias) and Roman loyalty.⁷⁷

On the other hand, the example of counterfactual history of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* could be easily transformed in a violent attack against Alexander. When describing the deeds of Papirius Cursor in a well known excursus, Livy polemicizes against whom he calls the most lightweight of Greeks (*levissimi ex Graecis*). They are accustomed to repeat that the Roman people would not be able to withstand the *maiestas* of Alexander’s name. In Livy’s words these anonymous Greeks are favorable to the Parthians (*Parthorum ... gloriae favent*).⁷⁸ The identity of these Greeks is one of the most puzzling mysteries in Classical historiography. Many names, more or less plausible, have been proposed by scholarship: Apollodorus of Artemita, Metrodorus of Scepsis, Potamon of Mytilene, Empylus of Rhodes, Straton, Timagenes of Alexandria.⁷⁹ Although Livy is using here the plural, one may think of a *pluralis pro singulari*

75 D.S. 18.4; Arr. *Anab.* 7.1.3. See Serena Bianchetti, “La concezione dell’ecumene di Alessandro in Diodoro XVII–XVIII,” in *Diodoro e l’altra Grecia. Macedonia, Occidente, Ellenismo nella Biblioteca storica*, ed. Cinzia Bearzot and Franca Landucci (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2005), 127–153, with a good discussion of the tradition on the relationship between Alexander and Roma, stemming from Clitarchus: Plin. *N.H.* 3.57 (= Clitarch. *FGrHist/BNJ* 137 F 31).

76 Memn. *FGrHist/BNJ* 434 F 1.18.2.

77 *Status quaestionis* in Stefania Gallotta, “Appunti su Memnone,” *Erga-Logoi* 2, 2 (2014): 65–77, esp. 69–71 (who considers the *locus* “un’invenzione propagandistica anti-romana”).

78 9.17–19, esp. 18.6.

79 It is impossible to offer here an exhaustive bibliography; e.g., see Spencer, *The Roman Alexander*, 41–53; Ruth Morello, “Livy’s Alexander Digression (9.17–19): Counterfactuals and Apologetics,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 92 (2002): 62–85; Braccisi, *L’Alessandro occi-*

and look at Timagenes as the only (or the main) author hidden in these lines. As Piero Treves recognized long ago in a seminal book, the excursus and the polemic against Timagenes should be examined in the context of Augustan policy and his settlement with the Parthians in 23–20 BC.⁸⁰

At any rate, it is clear that this Greek source had treated Alexander as an example of military virtue: Livy's aim on the contrary was to celebrate Roman virtue against the fortune of a king who had effectively become a depraved Persian monarch. In his eyes other Roman statesmen of 4th Century BC, apart Papirius, would have been able to defeat Alexander. With a more realistic touch, Ammianus Marcellinus, four Centuries later, wrote that only Papirius Cursor could beat Alexander.⁸¹ It is possible that Alexander depicted as a drunken orientalizing king may reflect or echo the image of Antony-Dionysus built by Augustan propaganda.⁸² Curiously this polemical hint had no great fortune during the Roman Empire, but it had a revival with the late Medieval, proto-humanist Petrarch. This author manipulated the Livian *locus* for his political purposes. In his interpretation, the role of the *levissimi ex Graecis* was transferred to the *Galli*, Guatier de Châtillon and the Franks, who denigrated the greatness of Rome. But that, obviously, is another story.⁸³

The excursus of Livy has some commonalities with the speech attributed to Appius Claudius Caecus during the war against Pyrrhus. Though it is often quoted in Roman sources, only Greek sources allow us to have a fuller account of Appius's words (*Ineditum Vaticanum*, Appian's *Samnitike* and Plutarch).⁸⁴ The sequence of events and the proposal of Pyrrhus' ambassador Cineas to the

dentale, 199–213; Muccioli, “La rappresentazione dei Parti,”; Nikolaus Leo Overtoom, “A Roman Tradition of Alexander the Great Counterfactual History,” *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 52 (2012): 203–212; Kathryn Welch and Hannah Mitchell, “Revisiting the Roman Alexander,” *Antichthon* 47 (2013): 80–100, esp. 98–99; Dominique Briquel, “Une présentation négative d’Alexandre à Rome, l’excursus de Tite-Live (IX, 17–19),” in *L’histoire d’Alexandre selon Quinte-Curce*, ed. Mathilde Mahé-Simon and Jean Trinquier (Paris: Armand Colin, 2014), 31–51.

80 Piero Treves, *Il mito di Alessandro e la Roma di Augusto* (Milano-Napoli: Ricciardi, 1953).

81 30.8.5. Cp. Flor. *Ep.* 1.23.2.

82 Cresci Marrone, “Alessandro fra ideologia e propaganda in età augustea,” 253–255, followed by Alberto Grilli, “Alessandro e Filippo nella filosofia ellenistica e nell’ideologia politica romana,” in *Alessandro Magno tra storia e mito*, ed. Marta Sordi (Milano: Jaca Book 1984), 123–153 esp. 149–150; Spencer, *The Roman Alexander*, 24–25.

83 *De viris illustribus*, *Alex.* 50; see also the invective *Contra eum qui maledixit Italiae*. Cp. Braccesi, *L’Alessandro occidentale*, 238–266.

84 *Ined. Vat. FGrHist/BNJ* 839 F 1.2; App. *Samn.* F 10.4–6; Plut. *Pyrrh.* 19 (and *An seni* 794d–e).

Romans with the reply and passionate speech of the old statesman seem very similar in these three sources (a dating in the 280/279 BC after the battle of Heracleia is plausible).

In particular, Plutarch's *Life of Pyrrhus* offers a speech with some polemical hints in the same vein as Livy's (the same example of counterfactual history is used). In Appian's words, "if the great Alexander of renown had come to Italy and had come into conflict with the Romans, when we were young men, and with our fathers, when they were in their prime, he would not now be celebrated as invincible, but would either have fled, or, perhaps, have fallen there, and so have left Rome more glorious still."⁸⁵

A generation later or so after Papirius Cursor, the Roman statesman Appian evoked somehow anachronistically the two well known adjectives related to Alexander (*Great* and *Aniketos*: probably the first one was not used during Alexander's lifetime) in order to highlight the greatness of invincible Rome (and to incite senators against Pyrrhus). This concept can be found, at least, already in the Lesbian poet Melinno, who wrote a hymn *Eis Rhomen* (SH 541): Rome is considered a daughter of Ares, and she rules over land and sea. Although the dating of this poet is still controversial, one may agree with Bowra who put her in the context of the 2nd Century BC or, at least, 1st Century BC.⁸⁶ Thus, Putarch here offers a very different view from what he expressed in *De Fortuna Romanorum*, a early work in which he ascribes to Fortune the death of Alexander.⁸⁷

The biographer in the *Life of Pyrrhus* may well have drawn from a Roman source of the late Republic, known to him probably through a Greek author. It is attractive to identify him with Dionysius, who was clearly pro-Roman in describing the conflict against Pyrrhus in his *Antiquitates Romanae*, as far as we can know. Dionysius' general judgement about Alexander deserves some further comment. In his *Antiquitates Romanae*, he recognizes the greatness of the conquests of Alexander, but he voices his strong criticism over his successors.⁸⁸ In his *interpretatio* of the succession of the hegemonies little room is left for the Macedonian kingdoms (they faded away after two or three generations), more or less as there was no space in other Greek historians in

85 *Pyrrh.* 19.2 (transl. Bernadotte Perrin).

86 Cecile Maurice Bowra, "Melinno's Hymn to Rome," *Journal of Roman Studies* 47 (1957): 21–28, esp. 28: "the first half of the second century is at least an appropriate time, since the cult of the goddess Rome was then lively in Greek cities and may well have inspired Melinno."

87 *De fort. Rom.* 326a–b.

88 1.2.3–4.

this canon (in particular, Polybius, Appian).⁸⁹ On the whole, the Macedonian dominion began to decline after Alexander's death and it included only a part of the *oikoumene* (this point was already stressed by Polybius).⁹⁰

On the other side, Dionysius saw Alexander as a marker of time in ancient Greece culture (as already Dinarchus had), connecting his judgment to the crisis of rhetorical art. For him, history should be divided in three distinct periods according to the rhetorical waves: the Classical one, the end of which is marked by the death of Alexander; the time of Dionysius himself, the beginning of which is identified with Augustus' rise to power; and an intermediate, the Asianist period.⁹¹

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89 Polyb. 1.2.1–7; App. *Praef.* 8.29 ff. See Michael Weißenberger, "Das Imperium Romanum in den Proömien dreier griechischer Historiker: Polybius, Dionysios von Halikarnassos und Appian," *Rheinisches Museum* n.F. 145 (2002): 262–281.

90 Polyb. 1.2.4–6.

91 *Orat. vett.* 1.1–2; 3.1; cp. *Dinarch.* 2.2–4. See Konrad Heldmann, *Antike Theorien über Entwicklung und Verfall der Redenkunst* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1982), 122–130; Casper C. De Jonge, *Between Grammar and Rhetoric. Dionysius of Halicarnassus on Language, Linguistic, and Literature* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2008), 10–11; Nicolas Wiater, *The Ideology of Classicism. Language, History, and Identity in Dionysius of Halicarnassus* (Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 60–64, 84–92; Francesco Donadi, in Francesco Donadi and Antonia Marchiori, *Dionigi di Alicarnasso. La composizione stilistica. Περί συνθέσεως ὀνομάτων* (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2013), 21.

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The Latin Alexander: Constructing Roman Identity

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The early twentieth century Alexander-historian Ulrich Wilcken once wrote that “every student has an Alexander of his own”, which is no less true today than it was when he wrote it.¹ Every approach to Alexander is mired in the experiences and understandings of the person interpreting the source material, causing a near endless number of Alexanders. Many of those approaches bear little resemblance to the Alexander presented in the sources (limited though they are) contemporary with the king. The Romans experienced the same phenomenon during a period of tremendous political change. In the first century BCE, the Romans witnessed a change in the functionality of the Republic as well as the elimination of that republic as it was replaced by monarchy. In such a dynamic, the Romans grasped anything and anyone that they could in an effort to come to terms with this new political landscape. Alexander the Great proved to be a useful tool for reflecting on the changing Roman world because of his imperial conquests but also his personality. In short, the Romans turned to the only historical imperial power they thought comparable to themselves. By focusing specifically on Latin authors, especially those situated in Rome proper, and by comparing those writers to their Greek counterparts, light can be shed on the process of constructing a Roman identity in the face of such upheaval as was experienced in the last centuries of the Republic and the earliest century of the Principate. And, ultimately, by adapting the Macedonian king to their need to understand and elucidate on the problems with imperialism and one-man rule, those Latin authors are responsible for creating another Alexander.

Alexander is rarely mentioned in Latin texts prior to the first century BCE, indicating that, in the two centuries after his death, an Alexander *topos* had yet to become fully entrenched in the Roman literary psyche. The first extant reference to Alexander by a Latin author occurs in Plautus’ *Mostellaria* (3.2), written in the late third century or early second century BCE.² This work, about a son who borrows a great deal of money unbeknownst to his

1 U. Wilcken, *Alexander the Great* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1967), xxix.

2 It has been argued that Plautus’s *Mostellaria* is an adaptation of Philemon’s *Phasma*. See Paul Nixon, *Plautus LCL* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924, repr. 1970).

father, puts Alexander—along with the late fourth-century tyrant of Syracuse, Agathocles—in a comparative role with Tranio, the slave responsible for the deception of a haunted house. In the passage, Tranio, asks *Alexandrum magnum atque Agathoclem aiunt maximas duo res gessisse, quid mihi fiet tertio qui solus facio facinora immortalia?* The reference to Alexander is rather casual and vague, making no mention of anything specific about Alexander, only indicating that he and Agathocles had just two great achievements.³ There is no clarification as to what those achievements were, leaving modern scholars to assume that conquest was among them. Nonetheless, these lines are the first to reference Alexander as “the Great” (*Alexandrum magnum*). A Latin author, not a Greek one, then, gives Alexander the sobriquet for which he is most known.⁴ No Greek author referred to Alexander as “the Great” until Longinus did so in the first century CE (*de Sublimitate*, 4.2).⁵ However, Greek authors do use similar phrasing, just not with Alexander. For instance, Polybius uses it on three occasions in reference to Scipio Africanus.⁶ Later Romans granted the epithet to those with special military achievement, solidifying the relationship between the term *agnus* and military prowess. The best known example is Pompey, who was often known to imitate Alexander and was awarded the title for his military success under Sulla.⁷ The term, therefore, is meant to call to mind an individual’s military success, which is the primary focus of most Latin authors’ writing about Alexander.

When Alexander was not being used for a discussion of martial success, his life and character were manipulated to explore the dynamics of one-man rule. In particular, the Romans seemed to be concerned with questions about the limits of one man’s power. Even before monarchy was “reintroduced” under Octavian/Augustus, Romans were uncomfortable with the power that one man could achieve. Certainly, Rome’s long-standing disdain for anyone claiming to be a king goes back to the founding of the Republic. But Latin literature seemed to be particularly concerned with the prospect of one-man rule in the first century BCE. One need only read the works of Cicero to deduce as much. It was not unusual for authors, both Greek and Latin, to invoke parallels between pretenders to monarchic power and Alexander. For instance, Pompey’s military prowess and penchant for successful conquest were reported favourably by

3 Peter Green, *Classical Bearings: Interpreting Ancient History and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, repr. 1998), 201.

4 For further discussion, see Peter Green, *Classical Bearings*, 200–202 and n. 95.

5 Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν μέγαν.

6 Polyb., 18.35.9, 31.26.1, and 31.27.1.

7 Sallust, *Hist.* 3.88, Appian, *BC* 2.1.1, and Plut. *Pompey* 13.3–5.

Cicero. In his *Pro Archias*, Cicero puts Pompey in the same class as Alexander when he equates Alexander's statement regarding Homer's record of Achilles' exploits with Pompey's gift of citizenship to Theophanes of Miletus, Pompey's historian (10.24). Here, Cicero takes ownership of Pompey, referring to him not by name but by stating "our own Great" (*noster hic Magnus*) while exalting him higher than Alexander with the addition of *qui cum virtute fortunam adaequavit*. Alexander, however, is simply referred to by his name without the famous epithet. Thus, a Latin author diminishes Alexander when put next to the Roman Pompey Magnus. Plutarch, however, a Greek author writing during the Principate, recalls Pompey's phil-Alexandrist with regard to portraiture, pointing out that it was not a close resemblance (*Pomp.* 2.1). Pompey, according to Plutarch, did not correct people when they referred to him as King Alexander to the extent that when he got older, it became a joke. For Plutarch, who had been speaking glowingly of Pompey, the invocation of Alexander serves as a transition to Pompey's military career, which is spoken of in positive terms cementing the relationship between military prowess and the Alexandrian model.⁸

Discussions involving Alexander and Pompey tend to be mostly positive, but the bluntly pejorative references to Alexander as king seem to have been accentuated by those writing about Caesar and his lieutenant, Antony, indicating a shift in Roman thinking. Writing early in the first century CE, Velleius, for instance, noted that Caesar was much like Alexander, but only when Alexander was sober and calm, thus highlighting the Macedonian king's intemperance (2.41.1–2) while simultaneously lauding Caesar's moderation (Suet. *Iul.* 53). Tacitus, an apparent republican, compares Alexander to the last, best hope for a return to a republic, Germanicus (*Ann.* 1.35). He seems to take exception to anyone suggesting that Germanicus was like the Macedonian king, concluding that if he was a monarch, Germanicus would have been a better one because he was more virtuous (Tacitus, 2.73). Tacitus points out specifically that Germanicus treated his friends fairly, he was temperate, he was monogamous, and he did not behave rashly. Indeed, he excelled Alexander in every possible virtue. For Tacitus, then, Germanicus represented the good qualities of a ruler, while Alexander did not. In the mid-first century CE *Pharsalia*, Lucan inserts Alexander at the point when Caesar has chased Pompey to Alexandria (10.20–52) and then searches for Alexander's grave. Lucan's treatment of Alexander here is stark. Alexander was a madman (10.20), a pirate (10.21) a destroyer of unity (10.45) whose death was fate's way of protecting the world (10.21–22). As Cae-

8 D. Spencer, *The Roman Alexander* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2008), 18–19.

sar walked the “Pellaeian court”, Cleopatra enters the story and is depicted not unlike Alexander: she is the shame of Egypt, deadly, evil, and unchaste (10.59–60). Thus, between Velleius, Tacitus, and Lucan, a clear sense of the qualities of a ruler emerges with Alexander serving as the bad example.

For many Romans, because Alexander spread Greek culture further eastward where it became corrupted, he is, in some ways, responsible for Greece’s fall from moral and cultural supremacy.⁹ Thus, Alexander became the perfect example of how the East can corrupt. Most of our sources for Alexander’s campaign to the East—both Greek and Latin—make mention of the king’s adoption of eastern customs.¹⁰ For instance, Livy, writing during the reign of Augustus, notes Alexander’s Persian clothing in the same breath as his bad qualities: megalomania, cruelty, drunkenness, and anger (9.18.4–6). Similarly, Curtius Rufus mentions that Alexander’s adoption of eastern dress came with an arrogant spirit (*animi insolentia*, 6.6.4). Thus, both authors suggest a relationship between Alexander’s eastern proclivities and the decline in his personality. As the Romans—and many Greeks—saw it, Alexander’s reign went into decline as he became more eastern than Macedonian. For Livy and for Curtius Rufus, this connection boded ill for Rome as it came into contact with these eastern cultures.

Alexander’s marriage to an eastern woman, Roxane, also factors into Latin authors’ view of the East’s ability to corrupt. Curtius Rufus intentionally paints a scene which puts Alexander in the midst of eastern opulence (8.4.22–26).¹¹ According to Curtius Rufus, Oxyartes, the Bactrian satrap, put on a banquet—characterized by Rufus as barbaric and opulent—during which his daughter, Roxane, and twenty-nine elite virgins were presented. Roxane’s beauty and carriage, he notes, were rare among barbarians (8.4.23). Rufus draws attention to Roxane’s inferiority by mentioning that she was of obscure birth as compared with those of royal lines, presumably referring to the daughters of Darius (8.4.25). Elizabeth Baynham has argued that Rufus dismisses Roxane’s value by characterizing Alexander’s instantaneous love for her as the work of

9 Elite Romans often displayed their respect for Greek culture by hiring Greek tutors for their children and patronizing Greek artists. E.g. Plut. *Aem. Paull.* 6.4–5 and Pliny, *NH* 34.54. See further E. Gruen, *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 223–271.

10 See for example Diod. 17.77.4, Plut. *Alex.* 45.2–3, and Justin 12.3.8.

11 Arrian’s account of Alexander’s first encounter with Roxane is quite different mentioning nothing of a banquet but rather that Roxane was a war captive (4.19). Plutarch, on the other hand, does mention the banquet and mentions that Alexander’s decision to marry her was born of both love and furthering of a policy of reconciliation (*Alex.* 47.4).

Fortune, which Rufus pointed out accounts for the king's lack of control over his passions (8.4.24).¹² The entire scene highlights the extent of Alexander's corruption in the east by highlighting Roxane's less than ideal status and Alexander's immoderation. Furthermore, one cannot miss Curtius Rufus's disdain over the whole affair when he mentions that Alexander's friends were ashamed at having a conquered man as a father-in-law (8.4.30). Rufus's approach to Alexander's interaction with Roxane is in stark contrast to the Greek authors who either highlight Alexander's restraint in not forcing Roxane (Arr. 4.19) or his moderation and politeness (Plut. *Alex.* 47.4).¹³ Alexander's actions, for Rufus, are those of a corrupt ruler who has lost any sense of moral balance, and in this way, Rufus displays a Roman ethnocentrism over the barbarian east.

Such Roman interpretations of Alexander's moral deterioration are evident in the treatment of Antony, who led several campaigns in the East and fashioned himself in such a way as to call Alexander to mind. Granted, much of the source material for Antony is likely coloured by Octavian's propaganda campaign to discredit him.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the sources do illustrate the East-West tension. Of particular interest to the reception of Alexander is the similarity in presentation of Antony and Cleopatra to Alexander's relationship with Roxane. Several sources, for instance, report that Antony's love of Cleopatra was so overwhelming that Antony essentially abandoned reason, calling to mind Alexander's lack of control mentioned by Curtius Rufus.¹⁵ Cleopatra is thus cast as a siren, luring Antony to his doom, a theme prevalent in many sources after Antony's demise at Actium.¹⁶ Furthermore, the ancient sources make reference to Antony's adoption of non-Roman dress and other immoderate behaviours.¹⁷ Indeed, Antony is vilified for many actions deemed un-Roman such as his excessive drinking, his feasting, his bloodthirstiness, and, of course, his love of Cleopatra.¹⁸ These are all attributes commonly associated with Alexander. Suetonius claims that Antony failed to act as a Roman, resulting in Octavian revealing Antony's will, in which he listed his children by Cleopatra as his heirs (Suet. *Aug.* 17.1). Even the Greek authors, like Plutarch, comment on the vulgarity of this action (*Ant.* 54.3). In essence, Antony, who was not acting at all

12 E. Baynham, *Alexander the Great: The Unique History of Quintus Curtius* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007, repr. 2007), 191–192.

13 The marriage to Roxane is only mentioned in the contents of Diodorus' book 17.

14 Paolo deRuggiero, *Mark Antony: A Plain Blunt Man* (Havertown: Penn & Sword, 2014), 210.

15 Plut. *Ant.* 36.1–2; Appian, *Bell. Civ.* 5.1.8.

16 E.g. Horace, *Epode* 9.10–12, Ovid, *Met.* 15.822, and Lucan 10.59–60.

17 Plut. *Ant.* 33.4; App. *Bell. Civ.* 5.1.11.

18 Sen. *De Ira* 83.25, Plut. *Ant.* 25.1.

like a Roman but rather as a barbarian of the East, left his 'estate' not to just his illegitimate children (at least as far as Octavian and Rome were concerned) but to barbarians of the East. Yet again, imperial "Roman-ness", which was becoming more clearly defined, proved superior to eastern customs since the stand-in for the East, Antony, lost at Actium against a Roman-to-his-core Octavian. The Roman West, then, dominated the East. Alexander and Antony serve as warnings for Roman conquest eastward as several authors point out that Romans succumbed to eastern corruption.¹⁹

The motif of the corrupting East can be seen in sources beyond Antony as well. Seneca, for instance, states in his *De Beneficiis* that the conquest of the East generated a super-human spirit in Alexander (1.13.1). Seneca does not hold back in his estimation of the Macedonian king saying that he was "of unsound mind" (2.16.1) and that his "greatest good was to be a terror to all humankind" (1.13.3). However, we must be careful in assuming that Seneca is only referring to Alexander here. Seneca, writing during the reign of Nero, often wrote about the corruptibility of absolute power in connection with the emperor.²⁰ However, to do so openly risked losing the favour of the emperor, and as a result, authors found it necessary to find other ways to convey the message.²¹ In many cases, Alexander was chosen precisely because he represented everything that authors such as Seneca wanted to rail against. Of course, it helped that Nero had a reverence for the king, even naming a legion "the phalanx of Alexander the Great" (Suet. *Nero* 19.3).²²

19 Polyb., 9.10.1–12 and Pliny, *NH* 33.48–50, 34.34.

20 H.M. Hine, "Rome, the Cosmos, and the Emperor in Seneca's *Natural Questions*", *JRS* 96 (2006), 64 and E. Winsor Leach, "The Implied Reader and the Political Argument in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* and *De Clementia*", in *Seneca*, John G. Fitch, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 264–198.

21 The *principes* were known to support free speech; however, there are several examples of them eliminating a particular voice. Take for example Ovid who was exiled under Augustus. Tiberius reacted quite similarly. For instance, there is the episode of Cremutius Cordus, who wrote a history praising the leaders of the plot to assassinate Julius Caesar. See further K.A. Raafaub and L.J. Samons II, "Opposition to Augustus", in *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate*, K.A. Raafaub and M. Toher, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 417–454. T.H. Habinek, *The Politics of Latin Literature: Writing, Identity, and Empire in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 151–169, and Steven H. Rutledge, "Oratory and Politics in the Empire", in *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric*, W. Dominik and J. Hall, eds. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 109–121.

22 Other emperors, such as Caligula and Trajan, displayed a penchant for emulating and identifying with the Macedonian king.

Though Alexander may have fallen to the cultural degeneration of the East while on campaign there, Rome's conquest of the East is further evidence of its cultural superiority, a key element in the creation of its imperial identity. The East/West dichotomy and its usefulness in explaining Rome's victory/superiority over Alexander's eastern empire also lent itself to a discussion of a 'policy' of imperial expansion, which was really more a question of whether to expand or consolidate. Thus, Alexander is most often used as a convenient starting point for the discussion of the limits of imperialism. Livy, for instance, writes in his account of the Second Punic War of a conversation between Publius Africanus, a diplomat, and Hannibal in which Africanus asked Hannibal whom he thought to be the greatest commander (35.14.6–11). Hannibal answered, "King Alexander of Macedon, who with a small force routed innumerable armies and who travelled the furthest limits, which is above human expectation to see."²³ At first glance, the lines express Hannibal's respect for Alexander's military achievements and his reticence to conquer further. The lines take on added value when one considers that the words are expressed by one of Rome's greatest enemies. By having Hannibal express, the clause *quas visere supra spem humanam esset*, the author could both show his amazement at Alexander's accomplishment and mask his anxiety about further expansion. Nonetheless, the Alexander cast here is a world conqueror, who overcame great odds and travelled further than anyone else. Any Roman could see the similarity here: a relatively small city-state rose up to defeat mighty Carthage and become an empire itself.

By the time of Augustus's successors, specifically Caligula, there was active discussion regarding the limits of expansion. For instance, Seneca the Elder, writing during the reign of Caligula and all of his excesses, uses Alexander in his *Suasoriae* to suggest that there are natural limits to imperial expansion. Seneca's *Argentarius* states that Alexander had conquered enough; he has conquered everywhere that the light has shined (*Suas.* 1.1–2). The invocation of the common light (the known) versus darkness (the unknown) *topos* serves a useful rhetorical purpose: in the unknown, the darkness, where light does not reach, lies peril. Seneca further states that even greatness has an end, that the heavens have their limit as do the seas.²⁴ His most powerful statement comes in the midst of a list of Alexander's accomplishments. He states that Alexander should cease expanding; "we do not seek the world, but we are losing

23 Livy 35.14.6–7: *Alexandrum Macedonum regem, quod parva manu innumerales exercitus fudisset quodque ultimas oras, quas visere supra spem humanam esset, peragrasset.*

24 *Suas.* 1.3: *Aliquis etiam magnitudini modus est: non procedit ultra spatia sua caelum.*

it.”²⁵ Thus, Seneca suggests that there is a natural limit an empire can reach before it begins to decline, and Alexander’s empire reached that point. In his own analysis, Seneca points out, using the words of the philosopher Fabianus, that “even if it were possible to navigate the Ocean, it should not be navigated” (1.9). All of these statements suggest a concern with how far is too far in terms of expansion. And, Seneca uses Alexander to engage in the discussion without overtly challenging the status quo.

Seneca’s own son, Seneca the Younger, tutor to Nero, continued the discussion writing that Alexander was not content with his conquests; he wanted more (*de Ben.* 7.2.5). Seneca’s view of Alexander was none too flattering as he often criticized his excesses. For instance, he invokes Alexander in his Stoic work *On Anger* emphasizing the king’s inability to control his anger (3.17.1). Here, Seneca sets Alexander up in stark opposition to Augustus, who was not ruled by his anger (3.23.1–2). The message to the audience, perhaps even Nero, could not have been clearer: be Augustus, not Alexander. Seneca’s nephew, Lucan, also writing during the reign of Nero, invokes Alexander similarly, referring to him as the Pellaean pirate and a madman.²⁶ Lucan further notes that Alexander provides a useful lesson to all in that one man cannot rule so much land calling to mind once again that there was a limit to imperial expansion (10.26–28).²⁷ Lucan’s invective against Alexander could just as easily be applied to Nero, with whom Lucan somehow fell out of favour.²⁸ However the breach in the relationship may have occurred, Lucan was forced to commit suicide or be executed for treason because of his involvement in a conspiracy to assassinate the emperor.²⁹ Unfortunately Lucan’s uncle, Seneca, got caught up in the fall-out and was forced to commit suicide as well. Nonetheless, in the case of both authors, the need to air their views or grievances against the current political order required a surrogate, a position that Alexander was viewed as able to fill. Both writers used Alexander to convey a point of view about imperialism and to some extent a view about too much power in the hands of one man. And for both men, Alexander was a deeply flawed human being and leader.

25 *Suas.* 1.2: *Non quaerimus orbem, sed amittimus.*

26 Lucan, *Bell. Civ.* 10:20–21: *Illic Pellaee proles vesana Philippi, Felix praedo.*

27 Cf. *ad Her.* 4.31.

28 Tac., *Ann.* 15.49, Suet. *Life of Lucan*, and Statius *Silviae* 2.7. The primary sources give different accounts of what caused the rift between the emperor and poet. Tacitus suggests that Nero took offense to Lucan’s poems as a rival would while Suetonius and Statius state that he essentially insulted the emperor. Tacitus notes that Nero took great joy in his former tutor’s death (*Tacitus, Ann.* 15.60–65).

29 Tac., *Ann.* 15.70.

Continuing in the same vein, Rufus, possibly a contemporary of both Senecas, includes in his history a discussion between Alexander and his men after the king was seriously wounded fighting the Malli in the Punjab region (9.6.15–22). The king's men encouraged him to set limits on his glory and have a care for his safety and that of the state, which Alexander took as concern for his personal welfare as the Macedonian king was the state.³⁰ Alexander's response was to continue.³¹ The juxtaposition of the state's safety with Alexander's desire to keep going to generate more glory implies that too much glory for a ruler threatens the safety of the state, or in other words, placing limitations on conquest works to the benefit of the state. However, the words Curtius Rufus puts into Alexander's mouth as a response to his men is telling:

ego me metior non aetatis spatio, sed gloriae. Licuit paternis opibus content intra Macedoniae terminos per otium corporis expectare obscuram et ignobilem senectutem ... Iamque haud procul absum fine mundi, quem egressus aliam naturam, alium orbem aperire mihi statui.

9.6.19–21

... I do not measure myself by the extent of my life, but by glory. Content with the works of my father, it is possible to expect through leisure an obscure an inglorious old age within the borders of Macedonia ... now I am not far away from the end of the world ... I am committed to open for myself another world.

For Rufus, Alexander is after his own personal glory, what the Greeks referred to as *pothos*.³² To achieve that glory, for Curtius Rufus, Alexander had to continue his conquest. Also, this section of Alexander's speech ends with a series of sentences which use first person future verbs, with no less than six being used (9.6.21–22). Alexander's language here suggests an emphasis on the individual not the state; though his men argue essentially that the king's focus should be

30 Curt. 9.6.15: *laudi modum faceret ac saluti suae id est publicae parceret*.

31 Contra. W. Heckel, "Alexander the Great and the Limits of the Civilised World", in W. Heckel and L. Tritle (eds.), *Crossroads of History: The Age of Alexander the Great* (Claremont, CA: Regina, 2003), 147–174 who suggests that Alexander had intended all along to stop at the Hydaspes River.

32 Arrian uses the term twelve times and Plutarch once at *Alex*. 8.4. For a lengthier discussion of Alexander's *pothos*, see V. Ehrenberg, "Alexander and the Greeks", in G.T. Griffith (ed.), *Alexander the Great: The Main Problems* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1966), 74–83.

on the state and not the self. From the Roman point of view, expansion for the sake of expansion, or for the sake of personal glory, then, does not benefit the state.

Juvenal continues the discussion of the limits of empire, writing in the late first century probably under the reign of the Flavians. Like Seneca and Lucan, he comments in *Satire 10* that “one world was not sufficient for the Pellaean youth” (10.168). Like Lucan, Juvenal diminished the Macedonian king by simply referring to him by his hometown, but further does so by emphasizing the king’s age with the use of *iuvēni* (“youth”).³³ Juvenal also states that Alexander raged at the narrow confines of his world (10.169) suggesting again that Alexander was not happy with the limits of his own imperialism. This particular passage shows parallels with Livy’s passage at 34.14 in that Hannibal is compared with Alexander in the context of the worth of great generals (10.147–148). Here, Juvenal buries Alexander between Hannibal and the Persian king Xerxes. None of these men are portrayed favourably. Hannibal is a madman who is bent on continual conquest (10.147–167) while Xerxes is filled with a savage rage and defeated gods (10.173–186). Hannibal becomes “the avenger of blood” while Xerxes sails his boat through bloodstained waves, pushing bodies out of his way (10.184–186). Yet, of the three, Alexander is the only one about whom Juvenal specifically mentions his death (in Babylon). The effect of Alexander’s angst at not being able to expand his rule further, along with his death in Babylon, leaves in the reader’s mind a connection between imperial conquest and death. Bookending this connection is the juxtaposition of Hannibal’s and Xerxes’ conquests with the notion that it is others who pay the price for expansion. In this regard, Juvenal uses Alexander—and Hannibal and Xerxes—to point out the inherent problems with expansion, and he does so at a time when Rome appears to have abandoned Augustus’ policy of consolidation rather than expansion.³⁴

Of particular concern to the Romans in this period of political upheaval was the issue of succession and its importance to Roman continuity. Because Alexander died young and his wife Roxane had yet to give birth, he became a useful vehicle for addressing the dire need to secure the line of succession. In general, our sources—both Greek and Latin—express a concern with the issue.³⁵ For instance, Rufus devotes a lengthy section (10.6) to the issue of

33 Statius also diminishes Alexander by simply referring to him as the Pellaean (*Silv.* 1.84–86).

34 For further information, regarding imperial expansion after Augustus, see Anthony Everitt’s *Augustus* (New York: Random House, 2006), 261–277.

35 For more on Greek authors’ concern for succession, see Diod. 17.16.2, Plut. *Alex.* 11.1–2, 77.4–5.

Alexander's succession in the course of which he approaches the issue of a blood succession or rule by council or a non-blood successor (Perdiccas was the man pinpointed). From the Roman perspective, the problem was that any child of the king (from Roxane or the women he married at Susa in 324) would also have eastern blood, which posed problems for the European part of the empire which saw the east as barbaric and beneath them (10.10–14). Like Curtius Rufus, Lucan specifically calls attention to Alexander's failure to provide for the succession when he states that "he took away his empire and left behind no heir" (*Bell. Civ.* 10.44–45). Thus, for Lucan, Alexander took the kingdom with him when died, making all of his subjects victims of his inability to plan adequately for a peaceful succession.

Latin authors' usage of Alexander's struggles, or lack of preparation, for succession can serve in some sense as contemporary commentary on the issues the Julio-Claudians had with succession. These problems no doubt led to a sense of disquiet and even perhaps a hope for political change with the accession of every emperor. Augustus's difficulties with selecting a successor are well documented but also reflect a concern with the changing political dynamic, from elected magistrates to hereditary dynasty. Augustus clearly looked to the Julian bloodline first (e.g. Marcellus, son of Augustus's sister, Octavia, and Lucius and Gaius, sons of his daughter Julia and his friend Marcus Agrippa) before settling on his stepson, Tiberius, whom he adopted.³⁶ However, Velleius, writing during Augustus's succession troubles, emphasizes continuity through ancestry and bloodlines in his history.³⁷ For instance, at 2.41.1, he makes a point to trace Caesar's ancestry back to Anchises and Venus which not only calls attention to the bloodline but also makes the connection to divinity. As much as some writers may have wanted to emphasize bloodlines, it was not always possible. Tiberius himself was not able to secure the succession until two years before his death by naming Gaius, son of his nephew Germanicus, and his grand-nephew Tiberius Gemellus as his heirs, adopting them in his will (Suet. *Tiberius*, 76). Thus, Tiberius attempts to stay within the bloodline, though distant. Following in Augustus's footsteps, Claudius adopts his stepson, Nero, the son of Caligula's sister, despite having a son of his own. Since his son, Britannicus was so young,

36 G.W. Bowersock, "Augustus and the East: The Problem of Succession", in *Caesar Augustus*, F. Millar and E. Segal, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 169–185 and W. Eder, "The Augustan Principate as Binding Link", in *Between republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate*, K.A. Raafaub and M. Toher, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 120–122.

37 Cf. Spencer, *Roman Alexander*, 86–87.

his selection of Nero essentially solidified the concept of the adoption of stepsons to ensure succession (*Ann.* 12.25). Thus, the principle of adoption sufficed in Rome in the absence of a blood heir. It is worth noting, though, that as Caligula's nephew, Nero was a member of the Claudian bloodline so the Romans did not stray too far from the concept of hereditary dynasty. Also, Nero's failure to produce an heir or select one sent Rome into a civil war led by generals, a situation that was little different than that faced by Alexander's empire after his untimely death, despite having a son by Roxane.

Regardless of whether the successor was a direct blood heir or an adopted one, each Roman monarch was put in the position of going to other lengths to legitimize his rule. One of those ways one's rule was justified was through the connection to the divine, either through family ancestry or deification of one's predecessor, and here Alexander is invoked with vigour. Alexander's connections to the divine offered new possibilities and new challenges for late-Republic and early-Principate Romans.³⁸ Simply claiming descent from the gods, as Alexander did, often did not pose a problem for our ancient authors. Latin authors did not take exception to these associations because the Romans had long done the same, indicating a belief shared with the Greeks that divine ancestry serves as a foundation for identifying great men.³⁹ For instance, Livy, at 26.19.5, suggests that Scipio was of divine stock but does not specify to which god the connection is made. The Fabii and Antonii connected themselves to Hercules, and the Julii claimed Venus as their ancestor.⁴⁰ And, since the Julio-Claudians could make that link to Julius Caesar, they could also make the link to Venus.

In addition to having the right ancestry, those destined for greatness had unique conception and/or birth stories. For Alexander, there are multiple stories of his miraculous conception. The tale, as reported by most authors of Alexander, casts him as the child of Zeus/Jupiter since the god impregnated Olympias in the form of a snake.⁴¹ Livy, for instance, mentions the well-known story of the serpent involved in Alexander's conception in conjunction with a discussion of Scipio's character and age. Scipio, according to Livy, had a habit of going to a temple every day before he conducted any business, and it was

38 Alexander could claim, through his father's line, to be a descendant of Hercules and, through his mother's Epirote roots, Achilles.

39 Weinstock, *Divus Julius*, 19 and D. Spencer, *Roman Alexander*, 178–180.

40 Fabii and Antonii: Ovid, *Fasti* 2.237, App., *Bellum Civile* 3.16.60, Plut. *Ant.* 4.2. The Memmii and Julii: Lucr. 1.26, Vell. Pat. 2.41.1; Suet. *Caesar* 6.2.

41 Plut. *Alex.* 2–3. The only mention of these stories in Arrian is put in the mouth of the objector, Callisthenes (4.10). cf. Justin 11.11.3.

this act that gave some men the idea that Scipio was divine, which revived the story of Alexander's conception being the result of a snake (26.19.5–6). Livy dismisses both tales as vacuous gossip, but he uses the story to highlight both Scipio's character and his young age when he assumed command (26.19.7–8). He states "he never mocked the belief of men in these miracles; in fact, he capably promoted such a practice as to neither deny anything nor openly assert it."⁴² Livy wants to chalk such idle talk about Scipio up to the things people will talk about when someone assumes power too young, which also applies to Alexander who assumed the Macedonian throne at the age of twenty. For Livy, these kinds of stories are merely an attempt—in hindsight—to rationalize youthful leadership.

Despite Livy's attempt to reconcile the stories, the descent from a god motif was applied to emperors, specifically Augustus. Suetonius, for instance, records a similar story of a serpentine conception, but it is not Alexander that is born from a god; rather it is Augustus (*Aug.* 94.4). According to this version, Atia, Augustus' mother, fell asleep in the Temple of Apollo and a snake entered her and then slithered away. Later, in the same section (94.5), Suetonius invokes Alexander when he sacrificed at an altar to Father Liber in Thrace. Augustus' father had similarly sacrificed and received the same omen: a pillar of flame. That night, Augustus's father had a dream of his son appearing with the adornments of Jupiter Best and Greatest. Augustus, in this way, is cast in the same fashion as Alexander; both men are born of gods. But, whereas Alexander is simply born as a son of a god and works to achieve deification—ultimately failing to do so—Augustus was cast as Jupiter himself before his very birth. Thus, the Roman model surpassed the Alexandrian one.

In addition to the story of the snake at Alexander's conception, we hear that the Ephesian temple of Artemis burned down at Alexander's birth, which could foreshadow his victory over the Persians.⁴³ The Roman counterpart is the story of a blazing laurel at Caesar's birth.⁴⁴ The *topos* of special birth carries into the Principate as Suetonius states that an astrologer cried out that the ruler of the world had been born at Augustus' birth (94.5: *affirmasse dominum terrarum orbi natum*).⁴⁵ All of these stories are intended to foreshadow the greatness of the subject and serve to provide an almost otherworldliness to that person. The

42 Livy: 26.19.7–8: *his miraculis nunquam ab ipso elusa fides est; quin potius aucta arte quadam nec abnuendi tale quicquam nec palam adfirmandi.*

43 Plut. *Alex.* 3.5–7; Cicero *de nat. deorum* 2.69; D. Gilley and I. Worthington, *Companion to Ancient Macedonia*, 188.

44 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina*, 2.120.

45 Weinstock, *Divus Julius*, argues that this legend is better attributed to Caesar (21).

Roman sources use the connection to the divine to legitimize Julio-Claudian rule, whereas the sources for Alexander uses those connections to illustrate his character flaws.

Because the first book of Rufus's history of Alexander has not survived, we do not know if he included the stories of miraculous conception. He does, however, mention the idea of Alexander as the child of Jupiter twice and on both occasions dismisses it outright (6.9.18–19, 6.10.26–27). On one occasion, he puts the dismissal of such stories in the mouth of Philotas as he stands trial. Philotas says "I in fact wrote that I pitied those who lived under a man who believed himself the son of Jupiter" (6.10.26).⁴⁶ The use of the subordinate relative clause with the reflexive pronoun suggests that Alexander alone held the belief in his divinity, casting doubt on the idea's believability. The passage is an echo of the line used at 6.9.18–19, but instead of a direct invocation of Alexander's belief, Curtius Rufus uses a broader sentiment: "he [Philotas] pitied those others who would have to live under one who rose above the measure of a man."⁴⁷ It is significant that the words in both cases are expressed by Philotas, who is brought to trial and executed, perhaps erroneously, for conspiring to kill the king.⁴⁸ Thus, Philotas can, in some sense, serve as a surrogate for the opposition to the deification of the Roman leadership.⁴⁹

There is no shortage of evidence suggesting Alexander sought apotheosis. The stories of his conception and birth along with the events at Siwah in 331, and *proskynesis* in 327, to name a few, suggest some plan for Alexander's divinity. Both Greek and Latin sources deride the story of Alexander as the son of Zeus because of his pretensions to his own divinity but the Latin authors wield the most vitriol. Compare, for instance, Arrian's and Plutarch's understanding of the visit to the oracle of Ammon at Siwah with Rufus's and Justin's. Arrian simply reports that Alexander was motivated to visit the oracle because he wanted to best Heracles and because he felt that he was descended from Ammon (3.3.2). Once before the temple's priests, Alexander simply made his inquiry receiving the answer he wanted (3.3.4).⁵⁰ Arrian's account is not peppered with disbelief and judgment, though he does add the phrase "so he said" at the priest's response indicating at least some level of incredulity. Plutarch includes a similar aside pointing out the oracle's mispronunciation in which

46 *At enim scripsi misereri me eorum, quibus vivendum esset sub eo, qui se Iovis filium crederet.*

47 *ceterum misereri eorum, quibus vivendum esset sub eo, qui modum hominis excederet.*

48 Greek sources on the Philotas issue: Diod. 17.79–80, Strabo 15.2. 10, Arr. 3.27.5, Plut. *Alex.* 48–49.

49 D. Spencer, *Roman Alexander*, 97, 178.

50 Diodorus' account at 17.51 is quite similar to Arrian's.

Alexander took delight (*Alex.* 27.5).⁵¹ Unlike Arrian, Curtius Rufus's report states that Alexander was not "at all content with mortal descent" (4.7.8). Later, Rufus comments on the emptiness of the oracle's answers as grounds for ridicule (4.7.29). Indeed, though Alexander was trying to increase his fame, according to Rufus, he corrupted it (4.7.31). Even Latin authors writing much later show a contempt for the idea. Justin, for example, states that Alexander exhibited a haughtiness and an odd arrogance after the visit to the oracle (11.11). Thus, the two Latin authors take a more sceptical and negative view of the events at Siwah than their Greek counterparts.

Regardless of how our sources saw it, Alexander established a precedent which the Hellenistic kings, and later the Romans, followed. For Romans, however, it was one thing to claim divine ancestry, but quite another to claim divinity for oneself and especially while alive. In this, Alexander appears to have gone too far. The attempt to introduce *proskynesis*, the Persian custom of prostration before a king, at Bactra in 327 illustrates this.⁵² Rufus' account of the event clearly indicates the author's position on Alexander's divinity because he begins the section by referencing Alexander's forethought on the issue and his deformed mind (*prava mente*). In the course of his description of the event, Curtius Rufus includes a statement that suggests broader implications, perhaps for Rome itself. For instance, at 8.5.6, he states that Alexander did not lack for flattery which was "a perpetual evil of kings whose power is often destroyed by flattery than by an enemy."⁵³ While he is certainly calling attention to Alexander's need for adulation, he broadens his scope with the general reference to kings in the plural before returning to the specific individuals associated with Alexander: Agis of Argos and Cleon from Sicily. It is into the mouth of the latter individual that Rufus puts the defence of *proskynesis* (8.5.10–12), but only after thoroughly disparaging his character and homeland (8.5.8). Alexander himself could not appear to introduce the custom without further alienating his men; thus, he needed to use someone else to test the waters, as it were. This move becomes clear at the end of the section when Curtius reports that Alexander was hiding behind a curtain while the debate occurred, acting as a sort of puppet-master (8.5.21).

As Elizabeth Baynham has pointed out, Alexander's use of Cleon was no different than how Caesar used Antony to offer him a royal crown during

51 τὸ σφάλμα τῆς φωνῆς; cf. Diodorus 17.50.1–3.

52 Curt. 8.5.5–24; Arr. 4.12.4–5; Plut. *Alex.* 53–54; Just. 12.7.1–3.

53 *Non deerat talia concupiscenti perniciose adulatio, perpetuum malum regum, quorum opes saepius adsentatio quam hostis evertit.*

a public ceremony.⁵⁴ Cleon's speech praises the wisdom of the Persians for worshipping their kings, since the majesty of the empire is its safety and protection. The invocation of the majesty of the empire as the very thing that provides for its safety and protection "is a deliberate reflection of Roman imperial divine policy".⁵⁵ One need only recall the elaborate physical landscape of Rome with its temples, theatres, and arenas, many of which were funded and dedicated to the divine by emperors.⁵⁶ Thus, Rufus puts Roman policy in the mouth of Alexander's defender and not in the mouth of his opposition, Callisthenes, whom Rufus labels as *vindex publicae libertatis* ("champion of public liberty", 8.5.20), a phrase that has republican echoes.⁵⁷ Moreover, Callisthenes is described in some heady, Roman republican terms: *gravitas* and *libertas* (8.5.13).⁵⁸ Callisthenes, as the mouthpiece of liberty, voices disapproval of the worship of a living ruler by stating that "divinity follows a man, but it never accompanies him" (8.5.16). Furthermore, Callisthenes' words tie in to the language of imperialism by stating that he does not want to learn how to honour his king from those who have been conquered. Cleon and Callisthenes become stand-ins for the debate between the Principate, with its imperial cult and emphasis of the emperor, and the Republic, with its emphasis on the collective. Indeed, the vocal opposition could serve as "a point of identification for Roman senatorial opposition", which was highly conservative.⁵⁹

Antony has already been invoked with regard to the corrupting influence of the East, but he can also be used to illustrate the Roman counterpart for claiming divinity while alive. Antony, like Alexander, claimed descent from Hercules and cultivated himself as the new Dionysus (Plut. *Ant.* 36, Sen. *Suas.* 1.6)⁶⁰ Antony demanded statues of himself as Dionysus and dressed as the

54 Suet. *Jul.* 79.2; Plut., *Caesar* 61.5–8; cf. E. Baynham, *Alexander the Great*, 193.

55 E. Baynham, *Alexander the Great*, 193.

56 Augustus, for instance, dedicated temples to Apollo, Julius Caesar, and Minerva among others (*Res Gestae*, 19). Tiberius rededicated a temple to Concord and one to the Gemini (Suet. *Tib.* 20); while Caligula completed several temples and theatre projects begun by his predecessors (Suet. *Calig.* 21).

57 Livy, for example, uses a variation, *vindex libertatis*, 3.56.6. Cicero uses it as well at *De Leg.* 3.39.

58 On *libertas* in the Republic and the early Empire, see M. Hammond, "Res olim Dissociabiles: Principatus Ac Libertas Liberty under the Early Roman Empire", *HSCP* 67 (1963), 93–113.

59 D. Spencer, *Roman Alexander*, 178.

60 For Alexander's connections with the divine, see Curtius Rufus 9.2.29, 9.4.21. For Antony's image construction, see Seneca, *Suas.* 1.6 and Dio 48.39.2.

god, developing a court befitting the divine. However, such parallels were not viewed favourably by Latin authors. Seneca, for instance, specifically mentions Antony's Dionysiac image after mentioning that it was necessary to flatter Alexander so as not to offend him, for to do so could lead to punishment (*Suas.* 1.6). The juxtaposition suggests that Seneca no more tolerated Antony as Dionysus than he did the flattery of Alexander. Isager suggested that Antony's association with Liber and his relationship with Cleopatra, which connected him to Alexander, allowed him to "establish a pompous dynastic program".⁶¹ In other words, Antony essentially created a divine dynasty, not unlike what Alexander attempted, and just like Alexander, Antony's attempt was a failure. Thus, Antony's degeneration, to use Suetonius' characterization (*Aug.* 17.1), once again parallels Alexander's.

Antony's attempt to claim divinity for himself while living was not customary for the Romans. The only attested case of a Roman individual being deified prior to the first century BCE is Romulus and that is better chalked up to legend.⁶² In the first century, however, the issue of deification appears to have been revisited with Julius Caesar. If Suetonius is to be believed, his deification occurred immediately upon his death since the people demanded it and proof was provided with the timely appearance of a comet, perceived as Caesar's soul, passing overhead (*Caes.* 88). Suetonius uses similar language with Augustus when he states that the emperor's soul was seen rising from the flames of his funeral pyre (*Aug.* 100). Regardless of the portents, *post mortem* deification was typically granted by the Roman Senate for emperors who ruled rightly.⁶³ Tacitus specifically states that "divine honours were not given to an emperor until he ceases to live among men" (15.74.3). Thus, Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius received the honours either just before or after their funerals.⁶⁴ For Antony, mimicking Alexander failed precisely because he was acting in a non-Roman fashion by assuming such honours while living.

61 J. Isager, "Alexander the Great in Roman Literature from Pompey to Vespasian", in *Alexander the Great: Reality and Myth*, J. Carlsen, D. Due, O. Due, and B. Poulsen, eds. (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1993), 78.

62 Livy, 1.16.3, Plut. *Rom.* 28.3. H.D. Jocelyn, "Romulus and the *di genitales* (Ennius, *Annales* 110–111 Skutsch)", in *Studies in Latin Literature and its Tradition in Honour of C.O. Brink*, J. Diggle, J.B. Hall, and H.D. Jocelyn, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 245–246 and I. Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 60.

63 Tac. *Ann.* 13. 2. 6, Plut. *Caes.* 67. 4, Dio 51.20–28. Cf. Weinstock, *Divus Julius*, 388 and Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 29.

64 Tac. *Ann.* 12. 69. 4, Plut. *Caes.* 67. 4.

Standing in stark opposition to both Antony and Alexander is Augustus who frequently refused such honours while alive (Suet. *Aug.* 52 and Dio 59.4.4). Tiberius followed suit rejecting offers of priests and temples in his name (Suet. *Tib.* 26. 1). There is some hint that perhaps Caligula and Claudius did the same (Dio 59.4.4–5 and 60. 5. 4). Gradel suggests that the rejection of divine honours was a political ploy which served to highlight the emperor's moderation, a traditional Roman value.⁶⁵ If it is one thing that is made clear by the Latin sources, Alexander lacked moderation which makes the gestures by Augustus and Tiberius appear to separate them from the legacy of the Macedonian king.

Both Caligula and Nero, however, represent what happened when an emperor failed to follow the accepted model. Not unlike Antony, Caligula was known to dress as a god, especially Jupiter and Venus; he even established a temple and priests to worship him.⁶⁶ Indeed, in a lengthy passage discussing the emperor's non-traditional clothing, Suetonius points out that Caligula even wore Alexander's breastplate, which he had taken from his coffin.⁶⁷ The image one gets is that of mad Caligula doing mad things while dressed as the Macedonian king. Suetonius's portrayal of Caligula is meant to show how an emperor should not be; the invocation of Alexander here is meant to further that notion.⁶⁸ Alexander is invoked in a similar fashion with Nero but with different results. At the very end of his list of the "less reprehensible" aspects of Nero's reign, Suetonius mentions that the emperor named a legion the "Phalanx of Alexander the Great", which was comprised of Italian-born troops (Suet. *Nero* 19). Diana Spencer argues that the imagery here is that Nero is in a position of authority over quite a number of mini-Alexanders, which "puts Nero back among the intellectual games played by Livy when he speculated that Alexander would always lose to Rome because he was one man whereas Rome comprised an endless succession of super-Alexanders (9.18.819)."⁶⁹ Unlike, Caligula who comes out poorly with the invocation of

65 Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 233. However, it does appear that worship of the living emperor was somewhat acceptable in the provinces, but certainly not in the capital. For more on emperor-worship in the provinces, see Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 73–108 and M. Koortbojian, *The Divinization of Caesar and Augustus: Precedents, Consequences, and Implications* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 165–185.

66 Suet. *Caligula* 22.1 and 52, and Philo *Leg.* 75–114.

67 Suet. *Caligula* 52.

68 A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius, the Scholar and His Caesars* (London: Duckworth, 1983), 61, 171.

69 D. Spencer, "Roman Alexanders: Epistemology and Identity" in W. Heckel and L. Tritle (eds), *Alexander the Great: A New History* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 264.

Alexander, Nero appears more favourable, but like Caligula, Nero too sought deification while alive.⁷⁰ Caligula's ultimate demise in 41 CE and Nero's suicide in 68 CE were a result of more than their claims to divinity, but those claims served to further blacken the idea of the worship of a living ruler. That negativity was already prevalent in the Latin sources discussing Alexander's claims as the Romans had determined as early as Caesar that worship of a living ruler was not 'Roman.'

By Nero's death in 68, Latin authors had manipulated and exploited the life of Alexander the Great to serve their own varied purposes and yet some consistency in presentation remains. Most conceded the Macedonian king's military prowess, but at some point in the first century BCE, he became the lesson for rulers. With Julius Caesar and Antony, he became a model for immoderation, for excess, for tyranny. He was the example *par excellence* of how the east corrupts, and by extension, he was used to show Roman mastery over its conquered populations. He was also invoked to provide commentary on the limits of imperial enlargement during times of Roman expansion, particularly after Augustus. On the whole, Latin authors used the Macedonian king as a warning for rulers, like Caligula and Nero, who embraced immoderation, excess, and tyranny. As a result, these Latin writers turned Alexander into exactly what the Romans said they did not want. In the end, Alexander became a reflection of Rome itself.

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70 Tac., *Ann.* 15.74.1, and Calp. Sic. *Ecl.* 4.142.

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Alexander the Great in Seneca's Works and in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*

Giulio Celotto

The fortune of Alexander the Great has always been vast. Thanks to his charismatic character and extraordinary accomplishments, soon after his death in 323 BCE he became a favourite subject for historians, novelists, orators, philosophers, and poets, who either glorified his outstanding deeds and virtues, or censured his equally outstanding vices. In the Roman world, his myth hit new heights in the first century BCE, when leaders like Pompey and Caesar, who had subdued foreign peoples and aspired to absolute power, were associated with Alexander, the sovereign *par excellence*. With the transition from Republic to Empire, Alexander became even more popular in this role as exemplary monarch. The administration of the Roman Empire is reminiscent of the organization of the Hellenistic monarchies established by Alexander's successors, and some Roman emperors (Augustus, Caligula, and Nero) looked to Alexander as their model.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the portrait of Alexander the Great by two authors of the Neronian age, Seneca the Younger and his nephew Lucan. Study of these authors' treatment of Alexander illustrates their attitude towards the Empire in general and, in particular, towards Nero. Previous scholarship has contributed some valuable studies addressing the treatment of Alexander in Seneca's corpus¹ and in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.² No study to date,

1 Cf. Charles Favez, "Alexandre le Grand vu par Sénèque", *Palaeologia* 7 (1958); Michele Coccia, "Seneca e Alessandro Magno", *Vichiana* 13 (1984); Domenico Lassandro, "La figura di Alessandro Magno nell'opera di Seneca", in *Alessandro Magno tra storia e mito*, ed. Marta Sordi (Milan: Jaca Book, 1984).

2 Cf. Aldo Luisi, "Il mito di Alessandro Magno nell'opera di Lucano", *Invigilata Lucernis* 5–6 (1953–1954); Mark P.O. Morford, *The Poet Lucan. Studies in Rhetorical Epic* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967), 13–19; Frederick M. Ahl, *Lucan: an Introduction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), *passim*; Jean-Michel Croisille, "Alexandre chez Lucain: l'image du tyran. Note sur *Ph.* x.1–52", in *Neronia IV. Alejandro Magno, modelo de los emperadores romanos*, ed. Jean-Michel Croisille (Brussels: Latomus, 1990); Fabrice Galtier, "L'épopée brisée d'Alexandre le Grand dans le *Bellum Civile* de Lucain (*Pharsale* x, 20–52)", in *Neronia VII. Rome, l'Italie et la Grèce*.

however, has offered an in-depth comparison of both. I trace the similarities and differences between the two portraits, in order to show that although both Seneca and Lucan, who share the same Stoic background, blamed Alexander as a man because he was unable to control his passions, their assessments of Alexander as king are antithetical. In fact, according to Seneca, Alexander's vicious nature made him a paradigm of a bad king, in contrast with virtuous emperors like Nero (before 59 CE). According to Lucan, on the other hand, his evil disposition made him the paradigm of a successful king; he is a model for all the leaders who aspire to the throne, like Caesar and Pompey in his own poem, and an enemy for those who defend the Republic, like Cato. This analysis reveals the profound difference between Seneca's and Lucan's political stances: while Seneca accepts the institution of the Empire and believes that emperors can be good, provided that they exercise virtue, Lucan thinks that monarchy is inherently a wicked form of government, and that all emperors, including Nero, are tyrants.

Seneca mentions Alexander twenty-three times in his works. Of these twenty-three occurrences, two do not convey any value judgment,³ only three express praise, and the other eighteen show him in a bad light. The three laudatory mentions do not seem significant, and can all be explained with contingent circumstances. In *Ir.* 2.23.2 the citation of Alexander as the example of a ruler who does not pay heed to informers is explained by Lana⁴ as Seneca's attempt to flatter the emperor Caligula, who considered Alexander his model, and under whose reign the philosopher wrote the first part of his dialogue; in the third book of the work (3.17, 23.1), in fact, written under the emperor Claudius, Alexander is mentioned again, but just to emphasize his irascible and violent character. In *Ep.* 53.10 Alexander is compared to philosophy, defined by Seneca as *domina*: they both prefer to bestow gifts upon their 'subjects' rather than to receive things from them. Seneca seems to praise the generosity of the king, but, as Lassandro notes,⁵ he is simply drawing from a large repertoire of *exempla*—the same used, among others, by his father Seneca the Elder for his *Declamationes*—the one that he considers most suitable for the circum-

Hellenisme et philhellénisme au premier siècle après J.C., ed. Yves Perrin (Brussels: Latomus, 2007).

3 At *Const. Sap.* 6.8 Seneca affirms that a man who possesses virtue has walls sturdier than those of Babylon, which Alexander violated. At *Ir.* 2.2.6, discussing how soldiers are stirred by the sound of the trumpet, the philosopher reports that Alexander was led to take arms by Xenophantus' songs.

4 Italo Lana, *Lucio Anneo Seneca* (Turin: Loescher, 1955), 121–122.

5 Lassandro, "La figura di Alessandro", 163.

stance. In *Ep.* 59.12 Alexander is praised for not giving credit to flatterers; but the episode is set at the time of the siege of a not well-defined Indian city, while the king is devastating the surrounding region.

As for the eighteen disapproving mentions of Alexander, they can be divided into two categories: the references to Alexander as a man, i.e. the mentions of Alexander in non-political contexts, where he is used as a negative model of behaviour for the common people; and references to Alexander as a king, i.e. the mentions of Alexander in political contexts, where he is used as a negative model of behaviour for rulers. All the references to Alexander in non-political contexts allude either to his inability to be satisfied with what he has and his consequently inextinguishable desire for more (lands, gifts, fame), or to his incapacity to control his anger. Numerous are the references to Alexander's insatiability. All four occurrences in the *De beneficiis* hint at that: at 1.13 Alexander is not content with having reached the territories that only Hercules, the wise man *par excellence* for the Stoics,⁶ and Bacchus had reached before him, but he wants to go farther; at 2.16 Seneca exhorts his readers to be moderate in both giving and receiving gifts, and he cites Alexander as the example of a man who is unable to do so; at 5.4.3 and 6.1 Alexander is contrasted with Diogenes, who is praised for being able to live with the little that he has; at 7.2.5 and 7.3.1 Alexander is contrasted more in general with all the people who are able to be content with the least. The same sort of criticism comes out in the *Epistulae*: at 91.17 Seneca mocks Alexander's thirst for glory by saying that death comes for everyone and makes all people equal; at 94.64 he discusses the thirst for money, and cites Alexander as an example of this vice; at 113.29 he blames Alexander because he did not realize that Fortune can change in the blink of an eye, therefore it is useless to strive to pile up riches that can be suddenly taken away from us; at 119.7 he again cites Alexander as an example of someone who is not able to be content with what he has. Lastly, at *NQ* 3 praef. 5, Seneca explicitly mentions Philip's and Alexander's *latrocinia*.

The references to Alexander's inability to control his anger are three: this vice is discussed at *Ep.* 83.19 and 83.23, where Seneca attacks drunkenness, which inevitably leads to anger, and evokes Cleitus' murder by Alexander in a drunken quarrel; and at *NQ* 6.23.2–3, where the philosopher recalls another renowned murder committed by Alexander, that of Callisthenes.

6 Cf. G. Karl Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme: The Adaptations of the Hero in Literature from Homer to the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972), *passim* (167–184 on Hercules in Seneca).

Insatiability and anger are strongly stigmatized by Stoic ethics. The Old Stoic School decries passions (πάθη / *passiones*)⁷ as vices that inevitably lead to unhappiness.⁸ They identify four passions: craving (ἐπιθυμία / *libido*), fear (φόβος / *metus*), pleasure (ἡδονή / *laetitia*), and pain (λύπη / *aegritudo*). Each of these generic passions includes more specific ones. In particular craving includes want (σπάνις / *indigentia*) and anger (ὀργή / *ira*): want is ἐπιθυμία τις ἐν ἀποτεύξει καὶ οἷον κεχωρισμένη ἐκ τοῦ πράγματος (text Hicks 1925) (“a craving when it is cut off from its object”, transl. Hicks 1925), anger is ἐπιθυμία τιμωρίας τοῦ δοκοῦντος ἡδικέναι οὐ προσηκόντως (“a craving to punish one who is thought to have done an undeserved injury”); similar to anger are wrath (μῆνις / *odium*), ὀργή τις πεπαλαιομένη καὶ ἐπικOTOS, ἐπιτηρητική δέ (“an anger which has long rankled and has become malicious, waiting for its opportunity”), and resentment (θυμός / *excandescencia*), ὀργή ἀρχομένη (“an anger in an early stage”). In light of this classification, it is possible to say that Seneca blames Alexander on account of his *libido*, which manifests itself sometimes as *indigentia*, sometimes as *ira* (or *odium*, or *excandescencia*). Alexander, therefore, is presented as a vicious man.

The references to Alexander in a political context are fewer. They are significantly aimed at hitting the same two vices attacked in non-political contexts: *indigentia* and *ira*. At *NQ* 5.18.10 Seneca makes it clear that Alexander’s insatiability is especially harmful because, since he is a king, it leads to wars and, consequently, to the loss of countless human lives. At *Ir.* 3.17, 23.1 the philosopher affirms that rulers should not fall prey to anger, and he cites Alexander, who savagely killed Cleitus and Lysimachus, as an example of a hot-tempered tyrant; similarly in the *De clementia*, the other side of the coin of the *De ira*, Seneca exhorts the young emperor Nero to be merciful and refrain from cruelty, which only suits tyrants like Alexander, who threw Lysimachus to the beasts and enjoyed that gruesome spectacle (1.25.1). The fact that in political contexts Seneca blames Alexander for the very same reasons which he blames him for in non-political contexts shows that in the eyes of the philosopher the character of a man and his performance as a king are strictly related: Alexander is a bad king because he is a bad man. In other words, integrity of soul and success as monarch are directly proportional.

7 All the Greek definitions for the passions are taken from Diog. Laert. 7.1.110–114, the Latin ones from Cic. *Tusc.* 4.11.

8 The Middle school partially re-evaluates the passions, arguing that they can become virtue and lead to happiness, if they are conveniently guided by reason (cf. Emmanuele Vimercati, *Il mediostoicismo di Panezio* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2004), 147–149).

This idea finds confirmation in the *De clementia*, where Seneca explicitly says that what distinguishes a tyrant from a king is their behaviour: *tyrannus autem a rege factis distat* (1.12.1). If a man is virtuous and does good deeds, he can be a good king; and since good kings are loved and protected by their own people, they are always safe: they can grow old and hand on their kingdoms to their descendants. On the other hand, if a man is vicious and acts with cruelty, he is destined to be a bad king, namely a tyrant; and tyrants are always short-lived, since they are hated and threatened by their subjects (1.12.4). Seneca also offers practical examples of this: Sulla (1.12.1–2) is mentioned along with Alexander (1.25) among the evil kings, whereas Dionysius of Syracuse (1.12.1), Tiberius at the beginning of his career (1.1.6), Augustus at the end of his career (1.11.1), and of course Nero, the dedicatee of the treatise, are considered to be good kings. This testifies that in Seneca's view monarchy is not inherently disgraceful: it is an acceptable form of government, as long as the king proves himself to be a virtuous man and, consequently, a virtuous ruler.

Lucan's position is different, as it is possible to infer from his portrait of Alexander in *BC* 10. At the opening of the book, Caesar arrives in Alexandria. He neglects all the monuments and riches that the city offers, and goes straight to visit Alexander's tomb:

- 20 *Illic Pellaei proles vaesana Philippi,
felix praedo, iacet, terrarum vindice fato
raptus: sacratis totum spargenda per orbem
membra viri posuere adytis; fortuna pepercit
manibus, et regni duravit ad ultima fatum.*
- 25 *Nam sibi libertas umquam si redderet orbem
ludibrio servatus erat, non utile mundo
editus exemplum, terras tot posse sub uno
esse viro. Macetum fines latebrasque suorum
deseruit victasque patri despexit Athenas,*
- 30 *perque Asiae populos fatis urgulentibus actus
humana cum strage ruit gladiumque per omnis
exegit gentes, ignotos miscuit amnes
Persarum Euphraten, Indorum sanguine Gangen,
terrarum fatale malum fulmenque quod omnis*
- 35 *percuteret pariter populos et sidus iniquum
gentibus. Oceano classes inferre parabat
exteriore mari. Non illi flamma nec undae
nec sterilis Libye nec Syrticus obstitit Hammon.
Isset in occasus mundi devexa secutus*

- 40 *ambissetque polos Nilumque a fonte bibisset:*
occurrit suprema dies, naturaque solum
hunc potuit finem vaesano ponere regi;
qui secum invidia, quo totum ceperat orbem,
abstulit imperium, nulloque herede relicto
 45 *totius fati lacerandas praebuit urbes.*
*Sed cecidit Babylone sua Parthoque verendus.*⁹

10.20–46

There lies the mad son of Macedonian Philip, that fortunate freebooter, cut off by a death that avenged the world. The limbs that should have been scattered over the whole earth they laid in a hallowed shrine; Fortune spared his dead body, and the destiny of his reign endured to the last. For if Freedom had ever made men their own masters again, his body would have been preserved for mockery—a man who was born to teach this bad lesson to the world, that so many lands may obey one lord. He left his own obscure realm of Macedonia; he spurned Athens which his father had conquered; driven by the impulse of destiny, he rushed through the peoples of Asia, mowing down mankind; he drove his sword home in the breast of every nation; he defiled distant rivers, the Euphrates and the Ganges, with Persian and Indian blood; he was a pestilence to earth, a thunderbolt that struck all peoples alike, a comet of disaster to mankind. He was preparing to launch his fleet on the Ocean by way of the outer sea. No obstacle to him was heat, or sea, or barren Libya, or the Syrtes, or the desert. Following the curve of the earth, he would have marched round to the West, and gone beyond both the poles, and drunk of the Nile at its source. But Death stood in his way, and Nature alone was able to bring his mad reign to this end: the power, by which he had seized the whole world, he carried away with him in his jealousy, and left no successor to inherit all his greatness, but exposed the nations to be torn asunder. He died, however, in Babylon he had conquered; and the Parthian feared him.¹⁰

In the first two lines of this portrait, Lucan makes clear that he is modelling his description of Alexander on Seneca's: the adjective *vaesanus*, in fact, is attached by Seneca to Alexander in *Ben.* 1.13.3, 2.16.1, and *Ep.* 91.17, and refers

9 David R. Shackleton Bailey, ed., *M. Annaei Lucani De bello civili libri x* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1988).

10 James D. Duff, trans., *Lucan. The Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1928).

to his inability to control his anger; the noun *praedo*, on the other hand, evokes *Ben.* 1.13.3, where Alexander is defined as *latro*, and *NQ* 3 praef. 5, where the philosopher blames him for his *latrocinia*, alluding to his insatiability. Having a common Stoic background,¹¹ it is not surprising that both uncle and nephew criticize Alexander on account of the very same vices, *indigentia* and *ira*, which clearly break the rules of Stoic ethics. Lucan's entire portrait is aimed at emphasizing these two vices. Alexander's violence and cruelty are referred to at lines 31–33, where the leader makes his way through Asia by means of the sword, butchers entire populations, and stains the rivers with the blood of his enemies. His ambition comes out at 29, where he shows scorn for Athens, already conquered by his father;¹² 32, where he reaches the river Ganges, never seen by any other Greek before; 36–37, where he seems ready to cross the Ocean;¹³ 37–38, where his advance is described as unstoppable; 39–40, where Lucan says that he would have adventured to the Western boundary of the known world, to the two poles, and to the springs of the Nile, if only he had lived any longer; and 43–45, where he is accused of being responsible for the wars between his successors, since he intentionally left no heir, so that his glory might remain unsurpassed.

In sum, Lucan blames Alexander as a man just like Seneca. But if for Seneca his vicious nature makes him an example of a bad king, this is not true for Lucan. Alexander plays the role of an *exemplum* in *BC* 10 as well (10.27); nevertheless, he is not the paradigm of the bad ruler, but rather, as Hoffman notes,¹⁴ of the monarch in general: he shows how one man alone can have power over so many nations and people (27–28). So the fact that he is such an evil character makes him not a bad king, but rather just a king. According to Lucan monarchy is a wicked form of government that deprives men of their freedom, therefore whoever aspires to the throne and/or succeeds in seizing absolute

11 For a broader discussion of the influence of Stoicism on Seneca's and Lucan's description of Alexander, see Johannes Stroux, "Die stoische Beurteilung Alexanders der Grossen", *Philologus* 88 (1933), who suggests that the philosophical position of the two authors strongly influences their assessments, and J. Rufus Fears, "The Stoic View of the Career and Character of Alexander the Great", *Philologus* 118 (1974), who, on the other hand, argues that their criticisms should be seen exclusively as the result of their political beliefs.

12 See also Sen. *Ep.* 94.62.

13 See also Sen. *Ben.* 7.2.5; *Ep.* 91.17, 119.7; *NQ* 5.18.10, 6.23.3. This criticism also recurs in Sen. *Suas.* 1.5, where it is debated whether Alexander should sail the Ocean or not. There the king is included *ex iis (...)* *quos superbissimos et supra mortalis animi modum inflatos accepimus*, since *orbis illum suus non capit*.

14 Werner Hoffman, "Das literarische Porträt Alexanders des Grossen im griechischen und römischen Altertum" (PhD diss., University of Leipzig, 1907), 57.

power is wicked. Differently from what Seneca believes, in Lucan's view a virtuous nature and success as a king are inversely proportional: the more vicious a leader is, the best chances he has to become king, and a successful one too. Alexander, in fact, is a very successful monarch, as Lucan makes clear at 41–42: only death could stop him. As George¹⁵ correctly argues, in the first century CE the Stoic community strives to find the best way to react to the transition from Republic to Empire; some of them accept the Empire, provided that the emperor shows virtuous and respectful behaviour, some others do not, since they consider monarchy a form of slavery, and support the Republic. Their portrait of Alexander corroborates George's thesis that Seneca is representative of the first line of thought, whereas Lucan is representative of the second one.

If the description of Alexander undoubtedly helps us get a better sense of Seneca's and Lucan's feelings about the Empire in general, it also helps us understand their opinion about the emperor Nero in particular, since they both wrote during his reign. Once again, their position is different. Before the falling out of the year 59 CE, Seneca still hoped that Nero could distance himself from the negative example of Alexander and become a virtuous emperor, as the *De Clementia* shows: he is the positive counterpart of Alexander.¹⁶ Lucan, on the other hand, believed that no emperor could be virtuous, and that therefore Nero was just as evil as Alexander: he is his 'alter ego'. After all, Nero himself openly pointed at Alexander as his model.¹⁷ First of all, Lucan's definition of

15 David B. George, "Lucan's Cato and Stoic Attitudes to the Republic", *Classical Antiquity* 10 (1991): 243–244.

16 Coccia, "Seneca", 23 and Giusto Picone, *Le regole del beneficio. Commento tematico a Seneca, De beneficiis. Libro I* (Palermo: Palumbo, 2013), 174 see an allusion to Nero behind the several disapproving mentions of Alexander in the *Ben.*, that Lana, *Lucio Anneo Seneca*, 49 dates to 63–64 CE. This interpretation leads to the belief that Nero, who was described as different from Alexander, and so a good king, in the *Clem.*, while Seneca was still his tutor, is portrayed as the new Alexander, and so a bad king, in the *Ben.*, written after the breaking off of his relationship with Seneca. Against Coccia's and Picone's theory, see Miriam T. Griffin, *Seneca on Society. A Guide to De Beneficiis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 185, who believes that Seneca's blame of Alexander in the *Ben.* has nothing to do with Nero, but rather is justified exclusively by his Stoic perspective.

17 Nero calls one of his eastern legions *Alexandri Magni* (Suet. *Nero* 19.4; Plin. *NH* 6.15.6; Dio 63.8.1), and gives orders to wash with gold the bronze statue of Alexander by Lisippus (Plin. *NH* 34.19.63). For a broader discussion of Nero's *imitatio Alexandri*, see, among others, Daniel Gillis, "Imitatio Alexandri: The License to Kill", *Centro Ricerche e Documentazione sull'Antichità Classica* 9 (1977–1978); Alessandro Aiardi, "Interessi neroniani in oriente e in Africa: l'idea di Alessandro Magno", *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 138 (1978–1979); Mario A. Levi, "L'idea monarchica fra Alessandro e Nerone", in *Neronia II*, ed. Jean-Michel Croisille et al. (Clermont-Ferrand: Adosa, 1982); Giovannella Cresci Marrone,

Alexander as *malum* (34)¹⁸ and *sidus iniquum* (35), which seems to pick up and overturn—with the typical Lucanian technique of the *imitatio negativa*—Seneca's definition of Nero as *bonum* (1.1.5) and *beneficum sidus* (1.3.3) in the *De clementia*, may be a subtle way to create a stronger and more direct connection between the two wicked monarchs. In the proem of the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan also foretells Nero's catastrophism: although he never calls the emperor *sidus*, he mentions the *obliquum sidus* from which the emperor will look upon Rome after his death (1.55).¹⁹ In addition, the reference at 44–45 to the fact that Alexander left no heir, leaving his empire in the grip of ferocious wars of succession, may be an allusion to Nero's childlessness: his only daughter Claudia Augusta, born in 63 CE, died at only four months of age.²⁰ Finally, the mention at 47–52 of Nero's ruinous campaign in Asia, opposed to Alexander's unstoppable advance, seems to be intended to present Nero as a second-rate Alexander, as vicious as his predecessor, but not equally able to conquer the East.²¹

The description of Alexander as the exemplary monarch in *BC* 10 gives the opportunity not only to better understand Lucan's political position, but also to offer a more accurate interpretation of his work, since Alexander is used as an *exemplum* within the poem as well. The three main characters, in fact, are modelled on him. Caesar is the new Alexander, an evil character who aspires to absolute power and succeeds in obtaining it; Pompey is a failed Alexander, since he aspires to absolute power too, but he does not succeed in obtaining it, perhaps because he is not wicked enough; Cato is the anti-Alexander, a virtuous leader who fights against monarchy on behalf of republican freedom. Ahl²²

"Alessandro in età neroniana: victor o praedo?", *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 142 (1983–1984); Jean-Louis Mourgues, "Néron et les monarchies hellénistiques: le cas des Augustians", in *Neronia IV. Alejandro Magno, modelo de los emperadores romanos*, ed. Jean-Michel Croisille (Brussels: Latomus, 1990); Yves Perrin, "D'Alexandre à Neron: le motif de la tente d'apparat. La salle 29 de la Domus Aurea", in *Neronia IV. Alejandro Magno, modelo de los emperadores romanos*, ed. Jean-Michel Croisille (Brussels: Latomus, 1990); Lorenzo Braccisi and Alessandra Coppola, "Il matricida (Nerone, Agrippina e l'*imitatio Alexandri*)", *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne* 23 (1997).

18 Thus Seneca defines Alexander's *animus ferox* in *Clem.* 1.25.1.

19 The *Adnotationes super Lucanum* and the *Commenta Bernensia* read this phrase as a satirical reference to Nero's obesity. Pierre Grimal, "L'éloge de Néron au début de la *Pharsale* est-il ironique?", *Revue des Études Latines* 38 (1960) and Michael J. Dewar, "Laying it on with a Trowel: The Proem to Lucan and Related Texts", *Classical Quarterly* 44 (1994) argue against this interpretation.

20 Tac. *Ann.* 16.6.

21 Cf. Cresci Marrone, "Alessandro in età neroniana", 88.

22 Ahl, *Lucan*, 252–254.

has persuasively suggested that the civil war can be divided into two phases. The first phase, fought by Caesar and Pompey and resolved with the battle of Pharsalus, is essentially a conflict between two reprehensible characters who seek personal power to the detriment of Rome. This conflict can only establish who among the two rivals is more dangerous: whoever wins will prove himself to be the worse (*omne malum victi, quod sors feret ultima rerum, / omne nefas victoris*, 7.122–123). Conversely, the second phase of the war, fought by Caesar and Cato after Pharsalus, is a much more relevant conflict, since it determines the future political system of Rome: Republic or Empire, freedom or slavery.²³ The fact that the three main characters of the poem are modelled on Alexander, presented in *BC* 10 as the king *par excellence*, corroborates this thesis. The first phase of the conflict, in fact, is fought by two leaders, Caesar and Pompey, who try to be like Alexander, namely to be king, although only the former succeeds; the second phase, on the other hand, is fought by a leader, Caesar, who looks more and more like Alexander and is ready to enslave Rome, and another, Cato, who is Alexander's exact opposite, since he is fighting against monarchy.²⁴

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- 23 This induces us to hypothesize that Lucan intended to end his poem with Cato's death and the definitive destruction of the Republic. On this hypothesis, cf. also René Pichon, *Les sources de Lucain* (Paris: Leroux, 1912), 269–270; Otto Schönberger, "Zur Komposition des Lucan", *Hermes* 85 (1957); Gudrun Vögler, "Das neunte Buch innerhalb der *Pharsalia* des Lucan und die Frage der Vollendung des Epos", *Philologus* 112 (1968); Elfrieda Frank, "The Structure and Scope of Lucan's *De Bello Civili*", *Classical Bulletin* 46 (1970); Werner Rutz and Andreas W. Schmitt, *Studien zur Kompositionskunst und zur epischen Technik Lucans* (Frankfurt-New York: Lang, 1989), 58–61; Tim Stover, "Cato and the Intended Scope of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*", *Classical Quarterly* 58 (2008).
- 24 This reading is in line with the traditional interpretation of the poem, which considers Lucan a fervent supporter of Cato against Caesar (cf. Morford, *The Poet Lucan*; Ahl, *Lucan*; Emanuele Narducci, *La provvidenza crudele: Lucano e la distruzione dei miti augustei* (Pisa: Giardini, 1979)). Such interpretation has been challenged by scholars like John Henderson, "Lucan: the Word at War", *Ramus* 16 (1987); Walter R. Johnson, *Momentary Monsters: Lucan and His Heroes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), and Jamie Masters, *Poetry and Civil War in Lucan's Bellum Civile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), who argue that Lucan was not politically involved, and his *epos* was not meant to send any political message. More recently, scholarship has reassessed the validity of the political reading, although with some significant innovations (cf. Shadi Bartsch, *Ideology in Cold Blood. A Reading of Lucan's Civil War* (Cambridge-London: Harvard University Press, 1997); Matthew Leigh, *Lucan: Spectacle and Engagement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Robert Sklenář, *The Taste for Nothingness. A Study of Virtus and Related Themes in Lucan's Bellum Civile* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003); Martin Dinter, *Anatomizing Civil War. Studies in Lucan's Epic Technique* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012)).

Caesar's association with Alexander is probably the most evident one. Lucan highlights the similarities between the two characters in two ways: on the one hand he portrays Caesar as the new Alexander by describing his visit to the ruins of Troy (BC 9.950–999) and Alexander's tomb in Alexandria (BC 10.14–19), which recollects the well-known episode of Alexander's visit to Achilles' tomb at Troy; on the other hand he includes in the portrait of Alexander (BC 10.20–46) some features that he has already ascribed to Caesar throughout the poem.

In 334 BCE Alexander invaded Asia. There he visited the ruins of Troy, and poured out libations to the heroes who died in the Trojan War.²⁵ In particular he placed a crown on Achilles' grave, with whom he clearly identified himself, for just like his predecessor, he was also leading a Greek army against Asian enemies.²⁶ He called Achilles blessed, since Homer had made his deeds immortal by means of his poetry. Lucan bears this episode in mind, and uses it to connect Caesar with Alexander, but he splits it into two parts: in BC 9.950–999 Caesar visits the ruins of Troy, just like Alexander, but not Achilles' tomb; his model, in fact, is not Achilles, but Alexander himself; and since Alexander was not buried in Troy, Lucan is forced to push back the second half of his account to BC 10.14–52, where Caesar visits Alexander's tomb in Alexandria. As for Caesar's visit to Troy, it is worth remembering that no historical source mentions this episode.²⁷ Scholars have proposed many valuable interpretations for this historical fiction: Ahl suggests that Lucan is playing here with the rumour that Caesar intended to transfer the capital from Rome to Troy (Suet. *Iul.* 79);²⁸ Mayer believes that the mention of Troy reflects the addiction of Neronian poets to Trojan themes;²⁹ Zwierlein argues that this episode is the negative

25 Diod. 17.7; Arr. *Anab.* 1.11–12; Plut. *Alex.* 15.

26 Cf. Waldemar Heckel, *The Conquests of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 42, who argues that Alexander's identification with Achilles is also a polemic reply of the king to Demosthenes, who referred to him as Homer's fool Margites.

27 Suet. *Aug.* 18.1 and Dio 51.16.5 report that Augustus paid homage to Alexander's tomb. Andreola Rossi, "Sine fine: Caesar's Journey to Egypt and the End of the *Bellum Civile*", in *Lucan im 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Christine Walde (Munich: Saur, 2005), 251–252 argues that Lucan makes up the story of Caesar's visit to Alexander's tomb to indirectly connect Augustus with Alexander. Jay D. Reed, "The *Bellum Civile* as a Roman Epic", in *Brill's Companion to Lucan*, ed. Paolo Asso (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2011), 29–30 supports this thesis with fresh evidence.

28 Ahl, *Lucan*, 109 n. 44.

29 Roland Mayer, *Lucan. Civil War VIII* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1981), 3.

counterpart of Aeneas' visit to Evander's city in *Aen.* 8, and therefore brings to completion the process of the "de-founding" of Rome.³⁰ But most likely Lucan has made up this story specifically to connect Caesar with Alexander.³¹ This seems to be confirmed by Lucan's comment on his own scene:

*Invidia sacrae, Caesar, ne tangere famae;
nam, siquid Latii fas est promittere Musis,
quantum Zmyrnaei durabunt vatis honores,
venturi me teque legent; Pharsalia nostra
vivet, et a nullo tenebris damnabimur aevo.*

9.982–986

Be not jealous, Caesar, of those whom fame has consecrated; for, if it is permissible for the Latin Muses to promise aught, then, as long as the fame of Smyrna's bard endures, posterity shall read my verse and your deeds; our Pharsalia shall live on, and no age will ever doom us to oblivion.

Lucan addresses Caesar to warn him that he should not be jealous of the everlasting fame of the Homeric heroes, since his fame will last forever as well: Lucan's poetry, just like Homer's, is able to make its subjects immortal. This remark comes out of the blue, since Caesar does not show any form of envy towards the Homeric heroes, so it can only be explained as a reference to Alexander's visit to Troy. It is Alexander, in fact, who envies Achilles' poetic immortality. Lucan is commenting on an observation that Caesar did not make explicitly, but that is implicit in his role as the new Alexander. Interestingly, Lucan also turns the consoling idea of poetic immortality into a threat, since what he is granting to Caesar with his poem is to be remembered forever not on account of his glorious deeds, as happened to Achilles and as Alexander hoped for himself, but rather on account of his cruelty and impiety.³²

After visiting Troy, Lucan's Caesar then moves to Egypt. As soon as he reaches Alexandria, he visits the tomb of his model Alexander. Lucan's portrait of

30 Otto Zwierlein, "Lucan's Caesar at Troy", in *Lucan*, ed. Charles Tesoriero (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 470.

31 Cf. Emanuele Berti, *M. Annaei Lucani Bellum Civile Liber x* (Florence: Le Monnier, 2000), 21–22.

32 Cf. Narducci, *La provvidenza crudele*, 109; Marion Lausberg, "Lucan und Homer", in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* 2.32.3 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1985), 1584; Zwierlein, "Lucan's Caesar", 461–462; Johnson, *Momentary Monsters*, 118–120.

Alexander (10.20–46) is aimed at creating a link between him and Caesar: in fact, there are several references to Caesar in Alexander's description. Firstly, as the adjective *felix* at line 21 and the phrase *fatis urgulentibus actus* at line 30 make clear, Alexander's conquests were favoured by Fate, just like Caesar's victory, called *felix* at 3.296, is said to have been decided by Fate at 3.392, 5.482, and 7.247.³³ Secondly, lines 31–34 evoke the portrait of Caesar at 1.147–157: as Alexander *humana cum strage ruit* (10.31), so Caesar rejoices for *viam fecisse ruina* (1.150) (noteworthy is the employment of the two cognate words *ruit* and *ruina*); and as Alexander *gladium per omnis exegit gentes* (10.31–32), so Caesar *numquam temerando parcere ferro* (1.147). In addition, at 10.34 Alexander is called *fulmen*, just like Caesar at 1.151–157 is compared to a thunderbolt on account of his unstoppable strength; as Berti³⁴ notes, in the characterization of Alexander, Lucan repeats not only the same metaphor but also the same alliteration of the letter “p” (1.153 = 10.35), which reproduces on paper the relentless and inexorable action of the thunderbolt and, consequently, of the two leaders. Thirdly, at 10.35–36 Alexander is defined as *sidus iniquum gentibus*; a few lines later (10.89–90) Cleopatra defines Caesar as *gentibus aequum sidus*, but only to flatter him. Lastly, at 10.43 Alexander is accused of *invidia*: he is so concerned with his own fame that he deliberately leaves no heir, so that his successor might not obscure his greatness; similarly at 9.82, in a passage expressly created to connect Caesar with Alexander, as has been shown before, Lucan warns Caesar that he should not nurse *invidia* for the fame of the Homeric heroes, since his own poetry will make him immortal too.

Then Caesar leaves Alexander's tomb, and heads to the royal palace of Alexandria, where Cleopatra holds a sumptuous feast for him to celebrate Caesar's reconciliation of herself with Ptolemy. At the end of the banquet, Caesar asks the priest Acoreus to explain the causes of the summer inundation of the Nile and to disclose its sources (10.188–191). Acoreus provides a long and detailed explanation of why the Nile floods in the summer, but he refuses to speak about its sources. He restricts himself to recalling that three other kings have tried to satisfy the same curiosity, but none of them succeeded, because nature forbade it:

*Quae tibi noscendi Nilum, Romane, cupido est,
et Phariis Persisque fuit Macetumque tyrannis,*

33 Cf. Narducci, *La provvidenza crudele*, who argues that Caesar's victory is the result of the will of a cruel Fate, one that replaces in the *Bellum Civile* the traditional stoic providential Fate.

34 Berti, *Annaei Lucani*, ad loc.

*nullaque non aetas voluit conferre futuris
notitiam; sed vincit adhuc natura latendi.*

10.268–271

Your desire, Roman, to explore the Nile was felt by the kings of Egypt and Persia and Macedon; and every generation has wished to enrich posterity with this knowledge, but has been defeated up till now by its native power of concealment.

Caesar is openly compared to three tyrants—Alexander, Sesostris and Cambyses—who were so eager to establish a universal kingship that they dared to look for the sources of the Nile,³⁵ traditionally considered an insurmountable boundary for every imperialistic ambition.³⁶ Although he probably never organized such an expedition,³⁷ Alexander is mentioned as first:

*Summus Alexander regum, quem Memphis adorat,
invidit Nilo, misitque per ultima terrae*

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- 35 Cf. Gloria Ferrari, "The Geography of Time: the Nile Mosaic and the Library at Praeneste", *Ostraka* 8 (1999): 385.
- 36 Cf. Claude Nicolet, *Space, Geography, and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 149–155.
- 37 Cf. Berti, *Annaei Lucani*, ad 10.272–275. Although several sources attest Alexander's interest in the peculiar behaviour of the Nile and the problem of its origin, the only one which explicitly reports that Alexander dispatched an expedition to the springs of the Nile is the lost section of Seneca's Nile book, summarized in John Lydus' *De mensibus* 4.107, which mentions a southward mission of Alexander's companion Callisthenes. Other texts (*FGrHist* III C1, 646 T 2a, c) incidentally allude to such an expedition. Yet others (Strab. 15.1.25 = Nearch. *FGrHist* II B, 133 F 20; Arr. *Ind.* 6.1.2–3, 5, 8;) indirectly connect Alexander and the springs of the Nile by narrating that when Alexander arrived at the banks of the Indus, he claimed to have found the origin of the Nile. Modern scholarship tends to distrust the news of Alexander's expedition (cf. J. Oliver Thomson, *History of Ancient Geography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 136; Lionel I.C. Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (New York: American Philological Association, 1960), 30–31; A. Brian Bosworth, "Aristotle, India, and the Alexander Historians", *τοποί* 3 (1993): 418–419), although some attempts to reconsider the trustworthiness of this piece of information have been made (cf. Stanley M. Burstein, "Alexander, Callisthenes, and the sources of the Nile", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 17 (1976); Luisa Prandi, *Callistene. Uno storico tra Aristotele e i re macedoni* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1985), 157; Phiroze Vasunia, *The Gift of the Nile: Hellenizing Egypt from Aeschylus to Alexander* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 278).

*Aethiopum lectos: illos rubicunda perusti
zona poli tenuit; Nilum videre calentem.*

10.272–275

Alexander, greatest of kings, was jealous of the Nile which Memphis worships, and he sent chosen explorers through the outmost parts of Ethiopia; but they were stopped by the blazing zone of parched sky; they but saw the Nile streaming with heat.

The portrait made by Acoreus is reminiscent of the one made by Lucan in the opening of the Book.³⁸ Lucan too, in fact, reports Alexander's plan to reach the springs of the Nile (40), and specifies that only nature could stop him (41–42). Moreover, *invidit* at 273 clearly recalls Alexander's *invidia* at 43. Only the adjective *vaesanus*, employed by Lucan at 42 in reference to Alexander, is referred by Acoreus to Cambyses instead (279);³⁹ but this *variatio* can be easily explained by the fact that in Acoreus' comparison Cambyses plays the very same role as Alexander, namely the exemplary tyrant. The purpose of the two portraits is identical as well: as Lucan aims at creating an implicit connection between Alexander and Caesar, so Acoreus establishes a very explicit parallel between the two monarchs. Once again, Caesar resembles Alexander: they share the same *noscendi cupido*. *Cupido* is synonymous with *indigentia*,⁴⁰ which

38 Francisco Barrenechea, "Didactic Aggressions in the Nile Excursus of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*", *American Journal of Philology* 131 (2010): 276–278 has argued that Acoreus can be considered one of the poem's *vates*-characters. Dolores O'Higgins, "Lucan as *Vates*", *Classical Antiquity* 7 (1988) has persuasively shown that all the episodes of the *Bellum Civile* which involve a *vates* can be read metapoetically (Masters, *Poetry and Civil War*, 133–134, 205–207 supports this thesis with fresh evidence). Therefore, it may not be too hazardous to compare the figure of Acoreus with Lucan (cf. Christine Walde, "Per un'idrologia poetica: fiumi e acque nella *Pharsalia* di Lucano", in *Doctus Lucanus: Aspetti dell'erudizione nella Pharsalia di Lucano*, ed. Luciano Landolfi et al. (Bologna: Pàtron, 2007), 15; Eleni H. Manolaraki, *Noscendi Nilum Cupido: Imagining Egypt from Lucan to Philostratus* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 84–85). Jonathan Tracy, *Lucan's Egyptian Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 246 suggests that the Acoreus-Caesar connection may also reflect the relationship between Seneca and his pupil Nero.

39 As at l. 20, so at l. 279 *vaesanus* refers to the *ira* of the monarch. The episode of cannibalism alluded to at *BC* 10. 281, in fact, is narrated in Sen. *Ira* 3.20.4 as well, where Cambyses' Ethiopian expedition is presented as the result of the king's rage against the Macrobioe, who refused to accept slavery.

40 For the insistence of the historiographical tradition on Alexander's *cupido*, see Jon A.P.

is one of the vices which Seneca blames in Alexander, and which makes him a bad man and ruler. Just like Alexander, Caesar embodies the perfect tyrant, who is unable to be content with what he has, and always looks for something more.⁴¹ And his successor Nero is no different. Nero too did, in fact, organize an expedition to find the sources of the Nile.⁴² Just like his predecessors, he was a tyrant who tried to transgress the boundaries established by nature, and just like them, he was destined to fail.⁴³

If Caesar is portrayed as the new Alexander, for his goal is to achieve absolute power, Pompey is no different, at least in his intentions. Lucan, in fact, presents the civil war between Pompey and Caesar as a conflict between two ambitious leaders, who aspire to the throne of Rome. At first, with the first triumvirate, they try to share the *regnum*, but in vain, since absolute power cannot be shared:

*Nulla fides regni sociis, omnisque potestas
impatiens consortis erit.*

1.92–93

Loyalty will be impossible between sharers in tyranny, and all great powers will be resentful of partners.

They fight to be the sole ruler of Rome; in other words, they fight to become king. For this reason, the outcome does not matter at all, as Brutus makes clear

Gissel, "Germanicus as an Alexander Figure", *Classica et Mediaevalia* 52 (2001): 298–299.

41 Barrenechea, "Didactic Aggressions", 268 connects this passage with *BC* 1.144–145, where Caesar's *virtus* is defined as *nescia stare loco*.

42 Sen. *NQ* 6.8.3; Plin. *NH* 6.181. For a broader discussion of the connection between Alexander's, Caesar's, and Nero's wishes to discover the source of the Nile, see Manolaraki, *Noscendi Nilum Cupido*, 81 with bibliography.

43 Cf. Ferrari, "Geography of Time", 385 n. 120. *Contra* cf. James S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 155–156, who believes that by recalling the celebratory account of Sen. *NQ* 6.8.3 Lucan intends to contrast Alexander's and Caesar's failed attempt to discover the sources of the Nile with Nero's successful expedition. Andrew J. Turner, "Lucan's Cleopatra", in *Private and Public Lies. The Discourse of Despotism and Deceit in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Andrew J. Turner et al. (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2010), 205–206 correctly remarks that Romm's conclusions can only be accepted if one assumes that Lucan was consistently positive about Nero, whereas they must necessarily be disregarded if one considers the poem an attack against the emperor.

when he confesses that he does not want to fight on either side, but rather is ready to fight against the winner at the end of the conflict:

*Quod si pro legibus arma
ferre iuvat patriis libertatemque tueri
nunc neque Pompei Brutum neque Caesaris hostem,
post bellum victoris habes.*

2.281–284

If, however, we resolve to bear arms in defence of our country's laws and to maintain freedom, you behold in me one who is not now the foe of either Caesar or Pompey, though I shall be the foe of the victor when the war is over.

Whoever wins will be the worse, and it will be necessary to fight against him. Cato, the defender of republican freedom, fundamentally agrees with Brutus, and if he resolves to fight on Pompey's side, it is just because he is sure that, if Pompey ends up winning the war, he will try to dominate the whole world, therefore someone will have to be there and stop him:

*Nec, si fortuna favebit,
hunc quoque totius sibi ius promittere mundi
non bene compertum est: ideo me milite vincat
ne sibi se vicisse putet.*

2.320–323

And yet I know full well that, if fortune favours him, he too looks forward to mastery over the world. Let me then serve in his victorious army, and prevent him from thinking that he has conquered for himself alone.

But if Pompey's and Caesar's plans are analogous, their results are different: Caesar succeeds in obtaining what he wants, whereas Pompey does not. For this reason, if Caesar is portrayed as the new Alexander, namely as an evil and, therefore, successful monarch, Pompey is portrayed as a second-rate Alexander, who aspires to monarchy, but fails.

Pompey was often associated with Alexander: Plutarch reports that his appearance was similar to that of his model (*Pomp.* 2.2), and that he assumed the same title, *Magnus* (13.8); Pliny the Elder calls his campaigns in the East as splendid as Alexander's (*N.H.* 7.26.95), and he also mentions several geographical, botanical, and medical discoveries made by Pompey during his stay

in that region, which recall those made by Alexander in the same region and registered by mythographers and paradoxographers.⁴⁴ Pompey himself promoted his association with Alexander by identifying himself with his predecessor: in 75 BCE he founded a city in Spain and named it Pompaelo (modern Pamplona) after himself, as Alexander did with Alexandria; in 71, after he had defeated Sertorius, he had a trophy set up on the Pyrenees with his statue on top, and the names of all eight hundred seventy-six cities that he had conquered inscribed on the base (Sall. *Hist.* 3.89; Plin. *N.H.* 3.18), just like Alexander did in the East (Diod. 17.95.1; Arr. *Anab.* 5.29);⁴⁵ in 61 he celebrated his triumph over Mithridates wearing Alexander's cloak (App. 117).⁴⁶ It is not surprising, therefore, that Lucan too associates Pompey with Alexander. However, in the *Bellum Civile*, Pompey is not portrayed as the new Alexander, as he tried to present himself and as other sources described him, but rather as a failed Alexander. Although both Alexander and Pompey have the title of *Magnus*, in fact, only Alexander is truly Great: Pompey is now just the shadow of his big name (*magni nominis umbra*, 1.135), or, better, of his name of *Magnus*.⁴⁷ First of all, Pompey is presented as the champion of the East. As the long list of his allies at 3.169–297 shows, he is supported by Greece, Africa, and Asia, namely all the regions previously conquered by Alexander. And to make the connection between the two leaders even stronger, at 3.229–234 Lucan explicitly says that Pompey reaches the river Ganges as well, where even Alexander had to stop. This information, repeated also in Alexander's portrait at 10.33, is historically incorrect, since Alexander stopped before the river Ganges, precisely at the river Indus.⁴⁸ Perhaps the mention of the Ganges is deliberately added by Lucan in order to create a closer relationship between the two characters, by identifying the same Oriental boundary for the conquests of both of them.⁴⁹ However, if Alexander conquered all these places and kept them under his rule until his death, Pompey conquers

44 Cf. John Leach, *Pompey the Great* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), 78.

45 Cf. Stefan Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 37.

46 Cf. Patrick McCloskey and Edward Phinney Jr., "Ptolemaeus Tyrannus: the Typification of Nero in the *Pharsalia*", *Hermes* 96 (1968): 72–73.

47 Cf. Denis C. Feeney, "Stat Magni Nominis Umbra. Lucan on the Greatness of Pompeius Magnus", *Classical Quarterly* 36 (1986).

48 Cf. Berti, *Annaei Lucani*, ad loc.

49 Interestingly, at 2.496–497, when Domitius tries to stop Caesar's advance at Corfinium by destroying the bridge on its river, Caesar openly says that not even the Ganges could stop him, once he has crossed the Rubicon. He is ready to go even beyond the limits of Alexander and Pompey.

all these places only to hand them over to Caesar in one day at Pharsalus, as Lucan points out in the punch line that concludes the list of Oriental allies:

*Acciperet felix ne non semel omnia Caesar,
vincendum pariter Pharsalia praestitit orbem.*

3.296–297

That Caesar, favoured by Fortune, might win all at a single cast, Pharsalia presented him the whole world to conquer at once.

Pompey is a failed conqueror who subdues countless people but does not enjoy his triumph; Caesar, the new Alexander, does it for him. It may not be accidental that Caesar is defined here as *felix*, just like Alexander at 10.21.

A similar episode is narrated in Book 8. After the defeat at Pharsalus, the Pompeian army must decide how to react. Without even consulting his counsellors,⁵⁰ Pompey sends king Deiotarus to the king of Parthia to propose an alliance. At 8.202–243 he declaims the message that Deiotarus should report to the Parthian king. He tries to present himself as the new Alexander: he lists all the people that he has subdued in the East, and he significantly mentions the exact same places mentioned in Alexander's portrait in Book 10, namely the river Euphrates (8.214), Babylon (8.225) and, again, the river Ganges (8.227). But once more, when he tries to compare himself to Alexander he fails: his words remain just empty speech.⁵¹ When he communicates his decision to the council, in fact, the former consul Lentulus persuades all the participants to disregard Pompey's proposal and to seek shelter in Egypt,⁵² which, to add insult to injury, is the place where Pompey will find his death.

Lastly, analogous and different at the same time are also the deaths of the two leaders. As Lucan makes clear at 10.22–24, after his death, Alexander's body was buried in a mausoleum in Alexandria, so that even after many centuries everybody can see him. Pompey is not as lucky. After he gets killed in Egypt by command of Ptolemy XIII, his body is treated with no respect by his murderers:

50 Pompey's behavior in this circumstance is regarded as despotic by Ahl, *Lucan*, 171 and Tracy, *Lucan's Egyptian Civil War*, 25. This observation is even more significant if one thinks that such an authoritarian act introduces a scene in which Pompey presents himself as the new Alexander, the tyrant *par excellence*.

51 Cf. Tracy, *Lucan's Egyptian Civil War*, 28–29.

52 Bartsch, *Ideology*, 48 cites this episode as one of the several scenes of the poem that undermine Pompey's heroism and virtue.

his head is severed, and his trunk thrown into the ocean.⁵³ Cordus, one of his followers, finds it and builds a humble tomb on the beach with the wood of a broken boat (8.712–822). Pompey is buried in Egypt just like his predecessor, but the destiny of their bodies is very different: one will be honoured forever, as Caesar's visit shows, the other will always be neglected. The connection between the two leaders gets even stronger when Gnaeus Pompey, Pompey's son, receives the news of his father's murder, and immediately threatens to destroy Alexander's tomb, in order to avenge the lack of burial of his father:

*Non ego Pellaeas arces adytisque resectum
corpus Alexandri pigra Mareotide mergam?*

9.153–154

Shall I not drag forth the body of Alexander from its shrine and sink it, together with the Macedonian city, beneath the sluggish waters of Lake Mareotis?

The destiny of the two leaders' bodies is also the subject of a first century CE epigram of the *Anthologia Latina* (*Anth. Lat.* 437–438):⁵⁴

*Quisquis adhuc nondum Fortunae mobile regnum
nec sortem varias credis habere vices,
aspice Alexandri positum (memorabile!) corpus:
ascondi tantum putris harena virum.*

*Iunxit magnorum casus Fortuna virorum:
hic parvo, nullo conditus ille loco est.
Ite, novas toto terras conquirite mundo:
nempe manet 'magnos' parvula terra duces.*

text RIESE 1894

53 At 9.14 Lucan defines the mutilation of Pompey's body as *ludibria*. Interestingly, at 10.26 he says that if freedom had ever returned to earth, Alexander's body would have been preserved for mockery (*ludibrio*), as the symbol of tyranny. In the world of civil war, however, in which freedom is trampled on by tyranny, it is the body of Pompey, the failed Alexander, that is object of ridicule.

54 The editors have always published it as two different poems, against the authority of the manuscripts; Vincenzo Tandoi, "Intorno ad *Anth. Lat.* 437–38 e al mito di Alessandro fra i "Pompeiani"", *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* 35 (1963) has persuasively shown that the two sections make sense only if they are part the same poem.

You, who still doubt that fickle is the rule of Fortune and that fate changes in turns, look at Alexander's memorable burial: the crumbling sand covers such a great man. Fortune connected the deaths of two great men: this was laid in a small place, that in no place at all. Go ahead, conquer new lands all around the world: certainly a handful of earth awaits 'great' leaders.

my own trans.

According to the epigrammatist, both Alexander and Pompey are buried in Egypt, the former with a little burial, the latter with no burial at all. By means of this description the author intends to remind his readers that Fortune can change, so striving to conquer the entire world is useless and foolish. It is not unlikely that this comparison, historically questionable, since the exact place of Alexander's tomb is still uncertain, derives from Lucan's description of the two leaders' burials, or, at least, is the expression of the same *milieu*. Perhaps the epigrammatist emphasizes the similarities between Alexander and Pompey rather than the differences, as Lucan does, because it is more functional for his purpose, or maybe he considers Gnaeus Pompey's threat at 9.153–154 as having been carried out.

If Caesar is portrayed in the *Bellum Civile* as the new Alexander, and Pompey as a failed Alexander, Cato is the anti-Alexander. After the battle of Pharsalus, Cato replaces Pompey in the war against Caesar. At the beginning of Book 9 Lucan makes clear that Cato did not firmly support Pompey—significantly called here just *Magnus*, so as to connect him with Alexander—against Caesar in the first phase of the civil war, because Pompey's goal was not different from Caesar's. But now Pompey has lost, proving in this way to be better than Caesar. Since, in Lucan's view, moral virtue and success as a king are inversely proportional, as has been shown before, Pompey's defeat is incontrovertible evidence that he is less wicked than his enemy. Therefore Cato can finally embrace Pompey's cause with profound conviction:

*Ille, ubi pendebant casus dubiumque manebat
quem dominum mundi facerent civilia bella,
oderat et Magnum. (...)
At post Thessalicas clades iam pectore toto
Pompeianus erat.*

9.19–24

While the issue remained uncertain, and none could tell whom the civil war would make master of the world, Cato hated Magnus as well as Caesar.

(...) But now, after the defeat of Pharsalia, he favoured Pompey with his whole heart.

A new phase of the civil war starts: the war between tyranny, embodied in Caesar, and freedom (9.30), embodied in Cato. Cato, in fact, opposes monarchy, and strenuously defends the Republic. When his army mutinies, he tries to persuade his soldiers to keep fighting by reminding them that by siding with Pompey they were not serving a king, but rather Rome and freedom:

*Ergo pari voto gessisti bella, iuventus,
tu quoque pro dominis, et Pompeiana fuisti
non Romana manus?*

9.256–258

It seems then, soldiers, that you too fought with the same desire as others, in defence of tyranny—that you were the troops of Pompey, and not of Rome.

Now that the first master is dead, it is time to fight against the second master, rather than to surrender to him:

*O famuli turpes, domini post fata prioris
itis ad heredem.*

9.274–275

Base slaves, your former master is dead, and you welcome his heir.

He emphasizes that the role of his army is to fight against all the people who aspire to be king. He could not be more different from Alexander, the king *par excellence* and the symbol of how *libertas* has been trampled; and his description is aimed at magnifying this contrast. At 9.18 Cato is defined as *invictus*, an adjective that would fit Alexander much better than Cato himself. Alexander, in fact, had never been defeated, and, as Lucan states at 10.41–42, only nature could stop him; on the other hand, Cato loses the war against Caesar. Therefore, in his case *invictus* must be explained differently: it is Cato's virtue that is unconquered, not his army.⁵⁵ Cato is as successful at being virtuous as Alexan-

55 *Invictus* is also a traditional epithet of Hercules, who was considered by the Stoics the paradigm of the wise man.

der at conquering. Cato is the perfect example of the Stoic wise man, whereas Alexander, incessantly dissatisfied with what he has and unable to control himself, is his exact antithesis. Marti⁵⁶ proposes to read the *Bellum Civile* as the conflict between a *sapiens*, Cato, a *proficiens*, Pompey, and an anti-Stoic, Caesar. Alexander, Caesar's model, cannot help being labelled an anti-Stoic as well.

The contrast between Cato and Alexander becomes more circumstantial when one compares their journeys in Africa. They visit the very same places: at 10.37–38 Lucan says that Alexander was not stopped by the torrid climate of Africa, crossed the Libyan Desert, and reached the Syrtic temple of Amun; Similarly Cato crosses the Syrtis (9.294–367), marches in the Libyan Desert suffering from heat and thirst (9.368–510), and reaches the temple of Amun (9.511–586). Nevertheless, as Ahl notes,⁵⁷ the purpose of the two journeys is different: Alexander's goal is to enslave and murder, whereas Cato's goal is to fight for freedom. In particular, there are two episodes in his journey that make Cato especially unlike Alexander. The first episode happens at 9.498–510: the soldiers are crossing the desert, and they are very thirsty; suddenly, they glimpse a small pond in the sand: one of them picks up the water in his helm and offers it to Cato, raising the envy of all the others; but the leader immediately throws it away, blaming the soldier for considering him so weak to accept such an offer. The very same episode is said to have happened to Alexander in Africa, as related by Curtius Rufus (7.5.9), Plutarch (*Alex.* 42), and Arrian (*Anab.* 6.26); according to Rutz,⁵⁸ it was taken from the '*Alexanderexamples*', a collection of anecdotes on Alexander himself. Lucan seems to know this story, and applies it to Cato, with one significant variation, noted by Cresci Marrone:⁵⁹ Alexander refuses the water to be like his troops, to put himself on their same level; Cato refuses to drink to distance himself from his troops, and to show that he is morally superior to his envious and petty soldiers.⁶⁰

56 Berthe M. Marti, "The Meaning of the *Pharsalia*", *American Journal of Philology* 66 (1945): 363.

57 Ahl, *Lucan*, 274.

58 Werner Rutz, "Lucan und die Rhetorik", in *Lucain. Sept exposés suivis de discussions (Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique xv)*, ed. Berthe M. Marti et al. (Genève: Vandoeuvres, 1968), 248.

59 Cresci Marrone, "Alessandro in età neroniana", 82.

60 On the difference between Alexander's and Cato's behaviours, see also Matthew Leigh, "Lucan and the Libyan Tale", *Journal of Roman Studies* 90 (2000): 100, who points out that Alexander does not dissimulate his thirst, whereas Cato dramatizes his Stoic indifference to physical needs.

Soon after this episode, Cato reaches the temple of Amun. Labienus exhorts him to consult the oracle in order to know the outcome of the war, but he vehemently refuses:

*Nec vocibus ullis
numen eget, dixitque semel nascentibus auctor
quidquid scire licet.*
9.574–576

The gods have no need to speak; for the Creator told once for all at our birth whatever we are permitted to know.

Cato expresses here the traditional Stoic view concerning oracles: they have no validity at all. Everything that men need to know is within themselves. They are part of the universal *ratio*, and each individual has a divine spark in himself. If men want to find some answers, they have to look in their own minds and souls.⁶¹ Very different is Alexander's reaction when he reaches the temple of Amun. Not only, in fact, does he consult the oracle, but the Oracle's answer, albeit controversial and contested, that Alexander is the son of the god becomes the foundation of Alexander's claim to divinity; starting from this moment, Alexander is not only an unconquerable king, but also a god. As Ahl notes,⁶² Lucan completely overturns this scene: if Alexander obtains his divine status by consulting the oracle of Amun, by refusing to consult the same oracle, Cato then shows his own divinity, the divinity that belongs to all the wise men who realize that they are part of the divine and universal *ratio*.

In conclusion, Alexander is a paradigmatic figure in the works of both Seneca and Lucan. Nevertheless, if Seneca, who accepts the Empire as a legitimate form of government, uses Alexander as the example of a vicious man and, therefore, a worthless king, Lucan, who believes that monarchy is a wicked form of government by nature, uses Alexander as the symbol of monarchy: the fact that he is a vicious man makes him not a bad king, but rather a successful one. He also employs Alexander as a model for the three main characters of

61 Cf. Anne-Marie Ozanam, "Le mystère et le sacré dans le stoïcisme romain à l'époque néronienne", *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* (1990): 281–282. Even Johnson, *Momentary Monsters*, 61, who undermines Cato's Stoic *virtus*, is compelled to admit that in this episode Cato becomes "what Stoic sensibility requires him to be."

62 Ahl, *Lucan*, 267. Cf. also Emanuele Narducci, *Un'epica contro l'impero* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2002), 409–410.

his poem: Caesar, who aspires to become the sole ruler of Rome and succeeds, is the new Alexander; Pompey, who has the same goal as Caesar, but does not succeed, is a failed Alexander; Cato, who strongly opposes monarchy and defends republican freedom, is the anti-Alexander.⁶³

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63 I am indebted to Prof. T. Stover for advice on this article.

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Plutarch's Alexander

Sulochana R. Asirvatham

In her monograph on the Roman Alexander, Diana Spencer studied the representation of Alexander the Great in Latin literature, which tends to view him negatively as an example of the excesses of power.¹ Roman sources are not all negative, however: the empire also birthed the most laudatory pieces on Alexander we possess, all written in Greek—Plutarch's biographical *Life of Alexander* and his two display-speeches collectively known as *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute*, Dio Chrysostom's *Kingship Orations*, and Arrian's *Anabasis*.² To say that they are the “most laudatory” is not to say that they are uncritical, but that they generally present Alexander as a hero, or at least as someone capable of heroic behavior. This represents a clear departure from the less obviously ideological treatments found in the Hellenistic period; the imperial Greek works also imbue Alexander for the first (and last) time in antiquity with a distinctly “Hellenic” persona reflecting the particular philosophical and cultural dispositions of each author. Plutarch's Alexander-works are certainly the most colourful and, today, the most popularly influential writings on Alexander³—indeed, one wonders whether we would be tempted to talk about a “renais-

1 Diana Spencer, *The Roman Alexander* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2002).

2 This also includes the *Greek Alexander Romance*, which like Plutarch's and Arrian's works present Alexander as ambitious, brave, and daring. Unlike those works, however, the *Romance* and its offshoots have a humbling message for Alexander, who, as he travels the world in a quest for knowledge (rather than for conquest), comes across a number of human and supernatural beings who counsel him to heed his own mortality. While Plutarch sees Alexander as a force of nature who comes to a tragic end, and Arrian's work is an extended praise of Alexander's Achillean attributes, the *Romance* and the vast tradition it influenced uses Alexander to contemplate mortality and the limits of human greatness. Richard Stoneman, *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend* (New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 2008), is the most complete available study of the Alexander Romance tradition in much of its globe-and-time-spanning entirety.

3 Admittedly this is hardly a scientific statement, but it is based on two observations. First, Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* is the only extant account of Alexander's birth and childhood, and as such it has naturally become the basis for any popular work that deals with young Alexander (e.g. Mary Renault's *Fire From Heaven* (New York: Knopf, 1969); Oliver Stone's film *Alexander* (2004)). Highlights are stories that illustrate Alexander's precociousness (e.g. the taming of Bucephalus) and education (by Aristotle and Leonidas), but perhaps the most powerful

sance” of interest in Alexander under Trajan without him.⁴ I am not primarily concerned here with establishing a connection between Trajan and Alexander, although it seems reasonable to think that it was Trajan’s interest in Alexander that prompted Greek writers to create new Alexanders. I seek instead to demonstrate how Plutarch establishes Alexander as the supreme conquering figure in world history—a world history that had for centuries been accepted by Greek writers as having the Roman Empire at its “end”—by distinguishing him from at least three “entities”: the Macedonian past, which includes his parents, Macedon itself, and its Macedonian soldiery; from his Hellenistic Successors; and, finally, from the Romans themselves—the last most easily examined by comparison with his treatment of Alexander’s counterpart in the *bioi*, Julius Caesar.⁵ (The Macedonian soldiers are sometimes an exception, as they have

point of interest is the rumour that Alexander was really the son of Zeus, which Plutarch suggests was fostered by Olympias (see below).

The second observation is the influence that Plutarch’s presentation of Alexander in *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute* as a “unifier of mankind” (329A–D) has continued to have on his popular image (as any internet search of “Alexander the Great” and “unity of mankind” will easily demonstrate), despite its decades-long rejection by scholars (e.g. Ernst Badian, “Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind”, *Historia* 7 (1958): 425–444; H.C. Baldry, “The Idea of the Unity of Mankind”, in *Entretiens sur l’Antiquité Classique* 8 (1961): 167–195; see also Paul Veyne, “Humanitas: Romans and non-Romans”, in *The Romans*, ed. Andrea Giardina, trans. L.G. Cochrane (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1993, 342–369). The idea came into the English-speaking world from Droysen via W.W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1948), 399–449, who believed that the idea that Plutarch attributes to Zeno the Stoic in *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute*, but which Plutarch says was only put into action by Alexander, originally came from Alexander himself. For quite the opposite interpretation (that Plutarch has imposed Romanizing ideas on Alexander) see Sulochana R. Asirvatham, “Classicism and *Romanitas* in Plutarch’s *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute*”, *American Journal of Philology* 126.1 (2005): 107–125, and below.

4 As does, e.g. Angela Kühnen, *Die imitatio Alexandri als politisches Instrument römischer Feldherren und Kaiser in der Zeit von der ausgehenden Republik bis zum Ende des dritten Jahrhunderts n. Chr.* (PhD. diss., Universität Duisburg-Essen, 2005), 193–194.

5 This article, in parts, summarizes arguments I have made elsewhere in “Olympias’ Snake and Callisthenes’ Stand: Religion and Politics in Plutarch’s Life of Alexander”, in *Between Magic and Religion: Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Mediterranean Religion and Society*, ed. Sulochana R. Asirvatham et al. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield 2001), 93–125; Asirvatham, “Classicism and *Romanitas*”; Sulochana R. Asirvatham, “The Roots of Macedonian Ambiguity in Classical Athenian Literature”, in *Macedonian Legacies: Studies in Macedonian History and Culture in Honor of Eugene N. Borza*, ed. Timothy Howe, et al. (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 2009), 235–255; Sulochana R. Asirvatham, “His Son’s Father? Philip II in the Second Sophistic”, in *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*,

an important role in assisting Alexander on the battlefield.) This is not to deny the tragic elements in Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*: Alexander's deterioration towards violence and superstition over the course of his life make Plutarch's biographical portrait impossibly ambiguous.⁶ Nor is to say that the Alexander of the *Life* is the "best person" among Plutarch's biographical subjects (although it would be hard to find someone with more overall greatness than the Alexander of *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute*). But it does seem worth asking what the significance is to Plutarch of Alexander, since he is the most mentioned historical personage in the *Moralia* and appears often in the *Lives* as well. Alexander does not, after all, belong to the archaic or Classical age, whose subjects Plutarch generally favours. In my estimation Alexander occupies a special space for Plutarch because he can appear as the most "Roman" of the Hellenes. When he is at his best, he is the closest that Plutarch gets to a "Greco-Roman" hero.

Plutarch creates the image of a Greco-Roman Alexander by highlighting the latter's superiority to various others—not only within individual narratives (the Alexander-works as well as *bioi* of Hellenistic figures), but also within his corpus as a whole, throughout which the larger Greek/Roman opposition operates. Plutarch is often mentioned in conjunction with (or as being on the vanguard of) the "Second Sophistic", a term used loosely to refer to writers of the Antonine and Severan periods whose writing demonstrates immersion in Classical literature and rhetorical training, and who wrote in Greek. His mix of κοινή and Attic Greek marks him out from later, more strictly Atticizing prose-authors,⁷ as does the extent of his "parallel" interest in Greeks and

ed. Daniel Ogden et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 193–204; 294–299; and in a forthcoming article on Alexander in Plutarch's Hellenistic Lives (Sulochana R. Asirvatham, "The Memory of Alexander in Plutarch's Lives of Demetrios, Pyrrhos and Eumenes", in *Ancient Macedonians in the Greek and Roman Sources*, ed. Tim Howe et al. Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, forthcoming). Part of the section on Alexander and Caesar was presented at the Society for Classical Studies meeting in January 2018 in Boston, MA, in a panel entitled "Reframing Alexandrology: the frameworks of commonplace in ancient discourse on Alexander the Great", inspired by Pierre Briant's wide-ranging new study on the subject of Alexander-commonplaces: *Alexandre—Exégèse des lieux communs* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 2016).

6 The classic study on tragic/epic elements in Plutarch's *Alexander* is Judith Mossman, "Tragedy and Epic in Plutarch's Alexander," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 108 (1988): 83–93.

7 Wilhelm Schmid, *Der Atticismus in seinen Hauptvertretern: von Dionysius von Halikarnass bis*

Romans. Because Plutarch generally emphasizes education and philosophical values over national origin, it is not difficult to see how Greek qualities might attach to Romans. But to my mind, Alexander is an example (perhaps a unique one, but this requires further research) of how qualities marked as “Roman” can attach to Greeks. Simon Swain has argued that Plutarch evaluates his Romans in terms of Greek values, a view that has been countered by Mark Shiffman, who emphasizes the role of Plutarch’s Platonism in his appreciation of the Romans’ creation of peace through unification—which the Greek *poleis* notoriously had trouble accomplishing.⁸ I tend to agree with Shiffman’s view, although he does not happen to take Alexander—whom Plutarch presents as the great philosophical unifier in world history—into consideration.

Alexander and the Macedonian World

We shall return to Alexander and the Romans below; it makes sense to first examine Alexander’s position within the oppositional rhetoric of Hellenic identity—a linguistic habit that had minimal presence in the κοινή of the Hellenistic period but was reinvigorated among Greek writers in the Roman period to varying degrees. As Gerhard Aalders has pointed out, Plutarch does not tend to use the opposition, in the Classical mode, to cover all of humanity.⁹ *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute* seems to be an exception (see below), but in any case the equation of all good things with “Greekness”—however it happens to be defined in any given moment—is an absolute given for Plutarch. Simply put, to be judged “Greek” is to fulfil a set of cultural and ethical ideals that are for Plutarch associated primarily with philosophy; to fall short of these ideals is to shade into “barbarism”.¹⁰ As has often been observed, Greeks and Romans can

auf den zweiten Philostratus, v. 4 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1896), 635–642 lists all of Plutarch’s words that are not found in the New Testament; see 643–685 for discussion of Atticist usage in later authors.

8 Simon Swain, “Hellenic Culture and the Roman Heroes of Plutarch”, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 110 (1990): 126–145 and Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 141–145; Mark Shiffman, “Plutarch among the Postcolonialists”, *Journal Perspectives on Political Science* 37:4 (2008): 223–230.

9 Gerhard Aalders, *Plutarch’s Political Thought*, trans. A.M. Manekofsky (Amsterdam/Oxford/New York: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1982), 13.

10 For a survey of Greek and barbarian characteristics in Plutarch, see Anastasios G. Nikolaidis, “Ελληνικός—βαρβαρικός: Plutarch on Greek and Barbarian Characteristics”, *Wiener*

equally appear to be “Greek” or “barbaric”, although one’s ethnic background may pre-determine some degree of barbarism. This is predictably true of the Persians, for example, who are depicted in the *Life of Alexander* as stereotypically eastern royals: wealthy beyond measure, and ostentatiously so.¹¹ Much more ambiguous as a place of origin is Alexander’s Macedon—of whose Classical and Hellenistic reputation Plutarch could not have been ignorant. In the *Life of Demosthenes* 12.1, Plutarch indicates that he has read the orator’s harangues of Philip (12.1), in which case he would certainly have encountered Demosthenes’s characterization of Philip as a man from a land so barbarous that “one formerly could not even buy a decent slave there” (ὅθεν οὐδ’ ἀνδράποδον σπουδαῖον οὐδὲν ἦν πρότερον πρίσθαι: *Third Philippic* 31). Plutarch also frequently cites Theopompus of Chios, who described Philip’s court as a gathering place for all the worst people, Greek or barbarian—a place where even a good person would quickly become corrupted “because of the lifestyle and the Macedonian mode of life” (ὑπὸ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς διαίτης τῆς Μακεδονικῆς: *BNJ* 115 F 224 = Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 4.166f–167c). Two other early Plutarchan models, Herodotus and Thucydides, vouched for the Hellenic origins of the Argead ruling dynasty in Peloponnesian Argos, but not of the Macedonian people they came from Greece to rule over—which I have argued elsewhere had an impact on both Demosthenes as well as Isocrates, who was pro-Philip precisely as an Argead ruling over Macedonians. Within the set of clichés embodied by the

Studien 99 (1986): 229–244. The last page includes a convenient chart of oppositional terms and phrases.

- 11 Even Persians, however, can be used to illustrate ideal attitudes: note the example of the Persian king in *Ad principem ineruditum* 780c–d, whose chamberlain reminds him every morning that his power is less than that of the god Oromasdes (as observed by Thomas Schmidt, “Barbarians in Plutarch’s Political Thought”, in *The Statesman in Plutarch’s Works*, Vol. 1., ed. L. de Blois et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 227. But, generally speaking, the eastern other operated within the same stereotypical space as they did in Classical Greece in the wake of the Persian wars (on which see the ground-breaking work of Edith Hall: *Inventing the Barbarian. Greek Self-definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).) On Plutarch’s stereotypical use of barbarians, see also Thomas Schmidt, *Plutarque et les barbares. La rhétorique d’une image. Collection d’Etudes Classiques* 14 (Leuven: Peeters, 1999) and Thomas Schmidt, “Plutarch’s Timeless Barbarians and the Age of Trajan”, in *Sage and Emperor: Plutarch, Greek Intellectuals, and Roman Power in the Time of Trajan* (98–117 AD), ed. Philip A. Stadter et al. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002).

Greek/barbarian distinction, the fact of being ruled implied a leve of slavishness that precluded the Macedonians from truly occupying the space of being Greek.¹²

Plutarch signals Alexander's Hellenicity through reference to qualities like the prince's humanity (φιλανθρωπία), gentleness (πραότης), fairness (ἐπιείκεια), self-restraint (ἐγκράτεια), self-control (σωφροσύνη) and—both in the *Life of Alexander* and *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute*, but truly permeating the latter—a philosophical education and attitude (φιλοσοφία). But Alexander must also go through the negative process of what Federicomaria Muccioli calls *demacedonizzata* (“demacedonianization”).¹³ The other side of the coin of

12 See Asirvatham, “The Roots of Macedonian Ambiguity”.

As for Macedonian-Greek relations: Plutarch is intriguingly circumspect about Chaeroneia, his home town (*Life of Demosthenes* 19.2), and the place where Philip and Alexander defeated the Greek forces in 338 BCE and effectively ended the era of independent city-states (the latter being the setting, one should note, for most of Plutarch's Greek *bioi*). In the *Life of Alexander* 9.2, we are told that Alexander was present at and took part in the battle of Chaeroneia against the Greeks (ἐν ... Χαιρωνείᾳ τῆς πρὸς τοὺς Ἑλλήνας μάχης παρὼν μετέσχε) and was said to be the first to break up the Thebans' Sacred Band. Plutarch also mentions the location of the oak near where Alexander pitched his tent and the common tomb of the fallen Macedonians. In *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute* 1.3, Plutarch manages to associate Philip, but not Alexander, negatively with Chaeronea (not surprisingly, given Plutarch's general treatment of Philip; see below). Among the examples of Greece “gasping” (ἐπέσπαιρεν) from Philip's (i.e. his alone) wars are Thebes's struggles after Chaeroneia, listed among the many problems Alexander had to deal with before his campaign. Even more dismissive of Philip—fittingly, considering the subject of the *bios*—is *Life of Demosthenes* 21.1–3: Plutarch tells us that, after the “disaster for the Greeks” (τῆς ἀτυχίας τοῖς Ἑλλήσι γεγενημένης), Demosthenes was absolved by the Athenian people even while continuing to be assaulted by other orators, and was therefore allowed to pronounce the eulogy over the dead from the battle; we are also told that Demosthenes felt freer to put forward decrees in his own name after the death of Philip. Plutarch then offers a short comment that emphasizes the empheral nature of Philip's victories, without mentioning his son's enduring successes: Philip “survived his good luck at Chaeroneia only for a short time” (ἐτελεύτησε ... τῇ περὶ Χαιρώνειαν εὐτυχίᾳ χρόνον οὐ πολὺν ἐπιβιώσας), a fate that was foretold by an oracle: “The conquered cry, but the conquerer has died.” (κλαίει ὁ νικηθεὶς, ὁ δὲ νικήσας ἀπόλωλεν.)

13 Federicomaria Muccioli, *La Storia Attraverso gli Esempi. Protagonisti e Interpretazioni del Mondo Greco in Plutarco* (Milan: Mimesis Edizioni, 2012), 134; 179. Negativity concerning Macedonia and the Macedonians is hardly limited to Plutarch: on Aelius Aristides, for example, see Sulochana R. Asirvatham, “No Patriotic Fervor for Pella: Aelius Aristides and the Presentation of the Macedonians in the Second Sophistic”, *Mnemosyne* 61.2 (2008), 207–227. Spencer (*Roman Alexander*, 5) points out that Alexander “the Macedonian” is a

demacedonianization is, of course, "Hellenization". One might say that Plutarch necessarily engages in the process of Hellenization, at least to some degree, whenever he idealizes one of his historical subjects. But in Alexander's case this goes beyond the assignation and reinforcement of Greek characteristics: he must also be peeled away from Macedon.

Plutarch begins his account of Alexander's conception, birth and early life with an emphasis not on Alexander's birthplace but on his heroic lineage (*Life of Alexander* 2.1), which ties him to Herakles on his father's side (πρὸς πατρός μὲν ἦν Ἡρακλείδης ἀπὸ Καράνου) and to Achilles via Neoptolemus on his mother's side (πρὸς δὲ μητρός Αἰακίδης ἀπὸ Νεοπτολέμου)—a lineage, Plutarch says, that is accepted without debate (τῶν πάνυ πεπιστευμένων ἐστί). The relationship between his parents seems to have started innocently enough: the young Philip met Olympias at the mysteries of Samothrace and fell in love with her (ἐρασθῆναι, *Life of Alexander* 2.1). Alexander's conception is surrounded by omens whose foreboding nature is not immediately obvious: the night before the wedding of Philip and Olympias, Plutarch tells us, the bride-to-be dreamed of a fiery thunderbolt falling on her womb. A little later Philip dreamed that he was putting a seal embossed with a lion on her womb—the latter of which was interpreted by the seers as a sign of Olympias's pregnancy and the strong, lion-like nature of the child in her womb (*Life of Alexander* 2.2–3).¹⁴ There are clear references here to Alexander's lion-like nature and his relationship to Herakles, who slew the Nemean lion, and to Zeus of the thunderbolt—the latter, however, is double-edged. The marital bed turns cold when Philip sees Olympias stretched out asleep next to a serpent¹⁵ and shrinks from her, believing she is either practicing magic or is the partner of a higher being (ὥς κρείττονι συνούσης, *Life of Alexander* 2.4).¹⁶ Olympias's odd behaviour is hardly mitigated by another story Plutarch tells (*Life of Alexander* 2.5–6): the local women were

derogatory figure in the Roman Empire. For readings of Alexander's character between Greek, Macedonian and barbarian in the *Life of Alexander*, see Asirvatham, *Olympias's Snake*; and in both the *Life* and *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute*, Tim Whitmarsh, "Alexander's Hellenism and Plutarch's Textualism", *The Classical Quarterly* 52.1 (2002), 174–192.

14 A bad lion-related omen presages Alexander's death immediately following his return to Babylon (*Life of Alexander* 73.3): a tame ass kicks one the lions in Alexander's menagerie to death.

15 The story of Olympias and the snake went on to influence the *Greek Alexander Romance* (on which wider influence see note 2 above), in which the pharaoh Nectanebo disguises himself as a snake-as-Zeus-Ammon to seduce Olympias (1.1–7), from which union Alexander (now half-Egyptian) was born (1.12).

16 On the complex origins of the mythical associations of Alexander and Zeus or Zeus Ammon through the symbols of the lion, the thunderbolt and the snake, see Daniel Ogden,

addicted to (ἔνοχοι) Bacchic rituals, which the queen performed more barbarically (βαρβαρικώτερον) than the other women with the aid of large tame snakes (ὄφεις μεγάλους χειροήθεις). The unspoken implication—that Olympias manipulated snakes belonging to Dionysiac ritual before an unwitting public in order to start a rumour of Alexander's divine sonship from Zeus—is made more explicit in *Life of Alexander* 3.1–2. After Philip receives an oracle from Apollo that bids him to sacrifice to Zeus Ammon, and which also tells him he will lose his eye for seeing his wife consorting with the god through a chink in the door (*Life of Alexander* 3.1), we are told that “Olympias, as Eratosthenes says, having sent Alexander on his expedition, and having let him alone know the secret of his birth, urged him to be worthy of his parentage” (ἡ ... Ὀλυμπιάς, ὡς Ἐρατοσθένης φησί, προπέμπουσα τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον ἐπὶ τὴν στρατείαν, καὶ φράσασα μόνῳ τὸ περὶ τὴν τέκνωσιν ἀπόρρητον, ἐκέλευεν ἄξια φρονεῖν τῆς γενέσεως). Plutarch also mentions an alternative version of the story in which Olympias tells Alexander to stop slandering her to Hera (*Life of Alexander* 3.4). His declarative description of Eratosthenes's version suggests that he accepts the truth of Olympias's conversation with her son.

As for Phillip: Plutarch compares Alexander's character favourably to that of his father in *Life of Alexander* 4.4–5: while Alexander was impetuous and violent in non-bodily matters but physically self-restrained, and had an ambition that made him serious beyond his years, Philip craved fame, priding himself “like a sophist” (σοφιστικῶς) on his oratory and engraving his Olympic wins on coins. In a short series of episodes that take place between Alexander's birth and Philip's murder, young Alexander's ambition emerges,¹⁷ and Philip demonstrates towards his ambitious son the same mixture of self-subordinating awe and disdain he had for his wife. A telling highlight is the scene in which Alexander tames the seemingly untameable horse Bucephalus in *Life of Alexander* 6—an action which, even more than his meeting with the Persians, metaphorically anticipates his “taming” of Asia. When Alexander sees that his father intends to send the horse away, Alexander insists that he be given a chance to control the horse. At first Philip chastises his son for thinking he can accomplish what his elders could not, but, when Alexander manages to control the horse, Philip is exultant, saying: “ὦ παῖ, φάναι, “ζήτει σεαυτῷ βασιλείαν ἴσῃν Μακεδονία γὰρ σε οὐ

Alexander the Great: Myth, Genesis and Sexuality (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2011), ch. 1–2.

17 First in his meeting with a group of Persian envoys during Philip's absence, to whom he demonstrates a precocious curiosity about Persia. The envoys are impressed by Alexander, seeing him as potentially greater than his father; Alexander fittingly complains that Philip will steal his victories, leaving him nothing to conquer (*Life of Alexander* 5.1–3).

χωρεῖ" ("My son", he said, "seek out a kingdom that is worthy of you, for Macedonia is not big enough for you!", *Life of Alexander* 6.5)—which words also, importantly, have the effect of subordinating Macedonia to Alexander. Eventually, the days of fatherly pride pass, and Alexander finds his claim to the throne threatened—with blame going to both father and mother. Plutarch holds Philip's uxorious behaviour responsible for accusations and quarrels between father and son (αἱ ... περὶ τὴν οἰκίαν ταραχαί, διὰ τοὺς γάμους καὶ τοὺς ἔρωτας αὐτοῦ τρόπον τινὰ τῆς βασιλείας τῇ γυναικωνίτιδι συννοσούσης, πολλὰς αἰτίας καὶ μεγάλας διαφορὰς παρεῖχον), but the situation also reflects badly on Olympias, a jealous and morose woman (δυσζήλου καὶ βαρυθύμου γυναικός) with a bad temper (χαλεπότης).¹⁸ Olympias's Epirote background (it can be inferred) also called into question Alexander's legitimacy: at a celebration of Philip's marriage to Attalus's young niece Cleopatra (when Philip was "too old for it", παρ' ἡλικίαν), the drunken uncle prays to the gods that the union bring a legitimate heir—which Alexander takes as a direct insult (*Life of Alexander* 9.4–5). Alexander will not escape his childhood—especially the rumours about his divine birth, which men of Philip's old guard found particularly offensive to their former general's memory¹⁹—but Plutarch ultimately refrains from blaming Alexander for his actions. In the highly idealizing context of *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute*, the situation is altogether less ambiguous, as it puts Alexander in the best light compared to everyone else: Philip is just another among the Greeks, Macedonians and barbarians who has left behind a mess for Alexander to clean up.²⁰ Olympias is not mentioned at all.

18 Ibid.

19 The narrative case is laid out in detail in Asirvatham, *Olympias's Snake*. The complaint that Alexander claimed divine parentage (*Life of Alexander* 50.6) is a feature of Cleitus's tirade against the king at the banquet in Maracanda, which resulted in his murder on the spot by Alexander (*Life of Alexander* 51.5). After Cleitus's death, Anaxarchus chastises Alexander for weeping like a slave (χλαίων ὥσπερ ἀνδράποδον), fearful of the law and of blame from men even when law and the measure of justice belonged to him (ἀνθρώπων νόμον καὶ ψόγον δεδουκώς, οἷς αὐτὸν προσήκει νόμον εἶναι καὶ ὄρον τῶν δικαίων); while he does not mention Alexander's possibly divine parentage, he connects Alexander to Zeus by reminding him that they are both masters of the world, for whom all actions are automatically lawful and just: οὐκ οἶσθα ... ὅτι τὴν Δίκα ἔχει πάρεδρον ὁ Ζεὺς καὶ τὴν Θέμιν, ἵνα πᾶν τὸ πραχθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ κρατοῦντος θεμιτὸν ᾖ καὶ δίκαιον; (*Life of Alexander* 52.3–4).

20 See Asirvatham, *His Father's Son*, 200 and note 12 above on Charoneia. There may be another additional layer to the subordination of father to son: Trajan's own subordination of his adoptive father Nerva by directing imperial *pietas* away from the family to the gods. (Asirvatham, *His Father's Son*, 195–196; Jean Beaujeu, *La religion Romaine à l'apogée de l'empire. 1. La politique religieuse des Antonins* (96–192). (Paris: Collection d'Etudes Anciennes, 1955), 88–91).

Alexander is also distinguished throughout the *Life of Alexander* from his Macedonian soldiers.²¹ Witness two brief scenes after the Battle of Issus in which Plutarch seems to contrast Alexander's attitude towards wealth with that of his soldiers. The first is more subtle and occurs when the Macedonians come upon Darius's camp, after the latter had sent most of the Persian baggage to Damascus; the second is rather more direct and takes place in Damascus itself.

In *Life of Alexander* 20.6–8, having given up his pursuit of Darius in the aftermath of the Battle of Granicus, Alexander returns to his men with the defeated king's chariot and bow, only to find "his Macedonians carrying off the abundant wealth from the barbarians' camp" (τοὺς Μακεδόνας τὸν ... ἄλλον πλοῦτον ἐκ τοῦ βαρβαρικοῦ στρατοπέδου φέροντας). The men had also picked out for him Darius's treasure-filled tent: Alexander takes off his armour and suggests that he and his men bathe, but a companion tells him the tent belongs to him, as conqueror, alone. When he sees all the luxurious wrought-gold bath furniture and the banquet hall and smells the spices and unguents in his rooms, he turns to a companion and says "This, as it would seem, is to be a king" (τοῦτο ἦν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἔφη, "τὸ βασιλεύειν"). While the exact tone of Alexander's words may not be altogether clear—whether of enjoyment, pity for Darius's materialism, or detached bemusement at the trappings of kingship in general (the latter, to my mind, being the most likely considering Plutarch's penchant throughout his corpus for philosophical *sententiae*²²)—what is clear, at any rate, is the contrast between Alexander's demeanour and that of his "looting" Macedonians, who have just been juxtaposed with barbaric wealth.

The second episode (*Life of Alexander* 24.1–2) takes place after Issus. Plutarch tells us that Alexander sent to Damascus to have the Persian money, baggage and womenfolk and children seized, and that the Thessalian horsemen enriched themselves more than any. The Thessalians are not depicted as money-hungry since, as we learn, Alexander sent them on the expedition in

21 This includes the generals whom Alexander inherited from Philip, especially Parmenion, whose advice Plutarch shows Alexander consistently rejecting during the campaign (e.g., when the general urges Alexander to accept Darius's offer of peace (*Life of Alexander* 29.7–9) and advises attacking the Persians at night at Gaugamela (*Life of Alexander* 33.10)). For brief discussion, see Waldemar Heckel, *Alexander's Marshals: A Study of the Makedonian Aristocracy and the Politics of Military Leadership*. 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 49 and n. 34. On the origins of positive, neutral and negative historiographical traditions on Parmenion, see Cinzia Susanna Bearzot, "La tradizione su Parmenione negli storici di Alessandro", *Aevum* 1987, 61.1, 89–104.

22 For a couple of interpretations, see J.R. Hamilton, *Plutarch, Alexander: A Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 53, note on τοῦτο ἦν.

order for them to enrich themselves: this was their reward for being exceptionally brave in battle (τούτους γὰρ ἄνδρας ἀγαθοὺς διαφερόντως ἐν τῇ μάχῃ γενομένους). Plutarch provides a contrast between the Thessalians and the rest of the (Macedonian) army, which was also filled with wealth: "And having tasted for the first time now gold and silver and women and the barbarian way of life" (καὶ γευσάμενοι τότε πρῶτον οἱ Μακεδόνες χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργύρου καὶ γυναικῶν καὶ διαίτης βαρβαρικῆς) the Macedonians became eager like dogs (ὥσπερ κύνες) to pursue the Persians' wealth. They are additionally contrasted with Alexander, who is "determined first to make himself master of the sea-coasts". Again, as in the previous passage, the contrast Plutarch seems to be making here is between Alexander, the leader who displays self-control (that most "Hellenic" of virtues), and the soldiers, who display no such virtue and are instead attracted to "barbarian" wealth. This opposition is reinforced not only by the positive connection between Alexander and the Thessalians, but also by the fact that in the intervening chapters (*Life of Alexander* 22 and 23) we have read about Alexander's famous restraint towards the Persian women as well as his moderate sleeping, eating, and drinking habits. When Alexander uses money lavishly, it is to reward excellent military performance, as with the Thessalians, or is an act of piety: in *Life of Alexander* 25, for example, we learn that Alexander sent five talents worth of incense to his old teacher Leonidas so that "he might stop dealing parsimoniously with the gods".

What is interesting is how distinctive this relationship between general and soldiers is within the larger scheme of Plutarch's work. Like other imperial writers, Plutarch believed that good leaders were ultimately responsible for the behaviour of their soldiers. As Lukas de Blois has shown for the *Life of Galba* and *Life of Otho* (which reflect Plutarch's general philosophy concerning leaders and soldiers, even if these *bioi* do not belong to the *Parallel Lives* but to the otherwise lost *Lives of the Roman Emperors*), the two short-reigned emperors are for Plutarch extreme examples of men who could control neither their soldiers, nor seconds- nor thirds-in-command. A leader should enrich his soldiers judiciously, in order to gain their compliance: conversely, soldiers cannot necessarily be blamed for their actions when their leaders do not know how to please them.²³ But we see something somewhat different in the *Life of Alexander*. In the scene in Darius's tent (*Life of Alexander* 20.6–8), the Macedonians appear to be more interested in pleasing Alexander than the

23 Lukas de Blois, "Soldiers and Leaders in Plutarch's *Galba* and *Otho*", in *A Roman Miscellany: Essays in Honour of Anthony R. Birley on his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. H.M. Schellenberg et al., 5–13 (Gdańsk: Foundation for the Development of Gdańsk University, 2008).

other way around: they rename the bath of Darius the bath of Alexander. In the second passage we see Alexander in the role of a typically shrewd “enriching leader” towards the Thessalians, but the Macedonians sit entirely outside that relationship. Most importantly, there is no implication in the *Life of Alexander* that Alexander is responsible for his soldiers’ actions, and Plutarch’s inclusion of “women” in the list of influences that corrupted the Macedonians creates an implied but clear contrast with what we have just read about Alexander’s gentlemanly treatment of the Persian women in Chapters 22 and 23. The overall effect is one of distance between Alexander and his men.

Alexander and the Successors

As fellow-fighters for world-civilization, the Macedonians have a more positive role in the *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtue* than in the *Life of Alexander*. In one passage, Plutarch imagines Alexander retorting to Fortune, who wishes to take credit for his deeds, by crediting his Macedonians for saving his life by overthrowing the wall of the Mallians, without which action he would have been buried in an obscure land (εἰ ... μὴ ... ἤρειψαν δὲ θυμῷ καὶ βίᾳ Μακεδόνες τὸ τεῖχος, ἔδει τάφον Ἀλεξάνδρου τὴν βάρβαρον ἐκείνην καὶ ἀνώνυμον κώμην γενέσθαι, 1.2). The Macedonian soldiers also have positive role in a somewhat unexpected place: in the *Lives* of the Successors, where they serve as reminders of Alexander’s greatness after his death. Plutarch’s treatment of Hellenistic history as represented by the *Lives* of Demetrius, Pyrrhus, and Eumenes is extremely complex and is the subject of a forthcoming essay.²⁴ I shall make some brief observations here, however, that pertain to the role of Alexander in these texts.

First, these three subjects seem to have been chosen deliberately for their negative qualities. The only other Macedonian figure with a *bios* besides Alexander is Demetrius; in *Life of Demetrius* 1.7 Plutarch says that the subject of this *bios* and his Roman counterpart Antony were chosen in order to illustrate Plato’s saying that “just as great natures display great virtues, they also display great vices” (καὶ κακίας μεγάλας, ὥσπερ ἀρετάς, αἱ μεγάλαι φύσεις ἐκφέρουσι). Pyrrhus shares in Alexander’s heroic lineage since, like Olympias, he is from Epirus, but in the end he is a more tragic version of the already tragic Alexander of the *Lives*, and Plutarch may have seen him as something close to (but not

24 Sulochana R. Asirvatham, “The Memory of Alexander in Plutarch’s *Lives* of Demetrius, Pyrrhos and Eumenes”, in *Ancient Macedonians in the Greek and Roman Sources*, ed. Tim Howe et al. (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, forthcoming).

quite reaching) the type of negative exemplar Demetrius represented.²⁵ Eumenes, the only Greek of the three, may have been chosen specifically to be a negative foil to Sertorius.²⁶ It also seems that the pairs to which they belong (*Demetrius-Antony*; *Pyrrhos-Caius Marius*; *Eumenes-Sertorius*), as well as the other pairs that include Classical subjects (*Agis/Cleomenes-Tiberius Gracchus/Gaius Gracchus* and *Philopoimen-Flaminius*) were composed only after Plutarch completed the *bioi* that included subjects from Classical Greece.²⁷ Thus of all figures in the “Greek” lives that represent the post-Classical world, Alexander alone comes across as an original Greek hero, despite the difficulties in reckoning with his connection to the Macedonian past.

Secondly, Alexander looms large as ‘historical memory’ in all three texts (he is only alive for part of the *Eumenes*). The most striking manifestations of the memory of Alexander are scenes in which a Successor is visited by Alexander in a dream; there are also scenes in which the judgment of a Successor is focalised through the Macedonian soldiery, who measure a potential leader’s worth by their recollection of Alexander’s leadership, which is as a rule positive, and thus appear positively. Two examples from the *Life of Demetrius* should illustrate the point. In *Life of Demetrius* 41.3, Plutarch tells us how, after Demetrius’s forces under Pantauchus were routed by Pyrrhus, the latter acquired a great and brilliant name among the Macedonians as a result of that battle (μέγα ... λαμπρὸν ἔσχεν ἀπὸ τῆς μάχης ἐκείνης ὄνομα παρὰ τοῖς Μακεδόσι) and that in him alone of the kings could they see the image of Alexander’s courage (ἐν μόνῳ τούτῳ τῶν βασιλέων εἰδῶλον ἐνορῶτο τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου τόλμης). The positivity of this image and the association with Alexander contrasts strongly with Plutarch’s description of the other kings, especially Demetrius (οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι, καὶ μάλιστα Δημήτριος), as merely imitating Alexander’s gravitas and dignity as if they were actors on a stage (ὥς ἐπὶ σκηνῆς τὸ βάρος ὑποκρίνοιντο καὶ τὸν ὄγκον τοῦ ἀνδρός). In *Life of Demetrius* 44.4, Demetrius misguidedly decides to distance himself from the Macedonians’ countryman Lysimachus and instead to fight against Pyrrhus, whom, however, the Macedonians appreciate for his (very Alexander-like) quality of acting mildly (πρᾶως, *Life of Demetrius* 44.5) towards them as prisoners of war; we are also told that the Macedonians—who, we should recall, appeared in the *Life of Alexander* as money-hungry quasi-barbarians—were tired of fighting on behalf of Demetrius’s luxurious

25 Timothy Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 101.

26 A.B. Bosworth, “History and Artifice in Eumenes”, in *Plutarch and the Historical Tradition*, ed. P.A. Stadter (London: Routledge, 1992), 56–89.

27 Joseph Geiger, “Plutarch's Parallel Lives: The Choice of Heroes”, *Hermes* 109 (1981): 90–95.

lifestyle (ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐκείνου τρυφῆς, *Life of Demetrius* 44.6). The Macedonians do not always appear positively in these works, but Plutarch's employment of them to enforce the dead Alexander's memory contributes well to Alexander's image as a great leader of soldiers. Furthermore, no amount of good warriorhood can fully ennoble these would-be Alexanders. The overall sense is that Alexander was the high-point of this "Hellenic" empire; the period following Alexander's death is a let-down, leaving soldiers eager for good "Hellenic" leadership bereft of a good leader.²⁸

Alexander and Caesar-qua-Rome

The Macedonians' positive appearance in the *Lives* of Demetrius, Pyrrhus and Eumenes, specifically as soldiers who had been well-led by Alexander, suggests that Plutarch has a specific, positive ideological use for them: they are not simply foils to Alexander's superior character. When they are good soldiers, their image can help bolster Alexander's image as a Greco-Roman ideal. Alexander's (Greek) humanistic qualities alone cannot make him appear as the ideal Greco-Roman conqueror-philosopher: he needs his fighting force. While the Macedonians may have had a reputation for cultural barbarism (generally speaking, drinking and luxury-related), their name continued to be associated throughout the Hellenistic period with an admired style of fighting;²⁹ when Caracalla created a "Macedonian" phalanx, presumably he did so because he associated the name (along with Alexander's) with martial toughness—the ridicule it caused notwithstanding.³⁰

Plutarch's Alexander himself confounds whatever true distinctions we might want to make between Greek (cultural) and Roman (martial) stereotypes, especially in *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute*. Note the following description of Plutarch's idealized Alexander, with its studied juxtaposition of "war" and "leisure" values: Plutarch makes Alexander stand above the Romans as well—not by disassociation but, on the contrary, by appropriation.

28 For the Trajanic context of the *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus*, see Asirvatham, "The Memory of Alexander", and Mallory Monaco Caterine, "Alexander-Imitators in the Age of Trajan: Plutarch's *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus*", *CJ* 112.4 (2017), 406–430.

29 For the training of soldiers in the Macedonian style in the time of the Successors, see A.B. Bosworth, *The Legacy of Alexander: Politics, Warfare, and Propaganda Under the Successors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 80 and n. 53 (citing several passages in Diodorus).

30 Cassius Dio 78.9; Herodian 4.8.2.

ἰδεῖν γοῦν ἔστιν ἐν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τὸ μὲν πολεμικὸν φιλόανθρωπον, τὸ δὲ πρᾶον ἀνδρώδεις, τὸ δὲ χαριστικὸν οἰκονομικόν, τὸ δὲ θυμικὸν εὐδιάλλακτον, τὸ δ' ἐρωτικὸν σώφρον, τὸ δ' ἀνειμένον οὐκ ἄργον, τὸ δ' ἐπίπονον οὐκ ἀπαραιμύθητον. τίς ἔμιξε πολέμοις ἑορτάς; τίς δὲ κώμοις στρατείας; τίς δὲ πολιορκίαις καὶ παρατάξεσι βακχείας καὶ γάμους καὶ ὕμναιους;

It is indeed possible to see that, in Alexander, the warlike is also humane; the gentle is also manly; the generous is also practical; the spirited is also placable; the amorous is also moderate; that his relaxation is not laziness; and his toils are not inexorable. Who else but he mixed together festivals with wars, campaigns with carousal; who else but he mixed Bacchic rites, weddings, and wedding song with sieges and battle-lines?

De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute 1.11

Alexander is here the ultimate example of the “philosopher of action”. I have argued elsewhere that the mix of active παιδεία and φιλοανθρωπία that Plutarch attributes to Alexander throughout the *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute* reflects the Roman ideology of imperial *humanitas*—or “civilizing power”—that appears throughout imperial literature.³¹ He is a philosopher, but better than the others (*De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute* 1.5): for example, Zeno is to be praised for teaching Diogenes (who deeply impressed Alexander), “but while Alexander was taming Asia, Homer was read, and the children of the Persians and the Susianians and the Gedrosians chanted the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides” (ἀλλ' Ἀλεξάνδρου τὴν Ἀσίαν ἐξημεροῦντος Ὅμηρος ἦν ἀνάγνωσμα καὶ Περσῶν καὶ Σουσιανῶν καὶ Γεδρωσίων παῖδες τὰς Εὐριπίδου καὶ Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίας ᾗδον). Socrates was persecuted on the charge of introducing new gods, but because of Alexander, Bactria and the Caususus honoured the gods of the Greeks (διὰ δ' Ἀλέξανδρον τοὺς Ἑλλήνων θεοὺς Βάκτρα καὶ Καύκασος προσεκύνησε). Plato could not get anyone to adopt his ideal republic, but Alexander founded over seventy cities among barbarian tribes (βαρβάρους ἔθνεσιν), and sowed all

31 See Asirvatham, “Classicism and Romanitas.” The word is used by Plutarch's contemporary Pliny the Younger in the *Panegyricus* to Trajan, eight times (2; 3; 4 (twice); 24; 47; 49; 71); for discussion see Philip Stadter, “Plutarch and Trajanic Ideology,” in *Sage and Emperor: Plutarch, Greek Intellectuals, and Roman Power in the Time of Trajan (98–117 AD)*, ed. Philip A. Stadter et al. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 229–230. It is also used (but with bitter irony) by Tacitus (*Agricola* 21), who laments that the Britains have mistaken the “enslavement” (*servitus*) of the superficial aspects of Roman culture (togas, baths, the elegant banquet etc.) for *humanitas*: *idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset*.

Asia with Greek magistracies (Ἑλληνικοῖς τέλεσι), prevailing over its savage and beastly way of life (τῆς ἀνημέρου καὶ θηριώδους ἐκράτησε διαίτης). In a particularly influential passage (*De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute* 1.6),³² Plutarch praises Alexander for having put into action Zeno the Stoic's idea that Greeks and barbarians alike should live in a common life and common order (εἷς ... βίος καὶ κόσμος). Rather than heeding Aristotle's advice that he should "treat the Greeks as *hēgemōn* and the barbarians as a despot, and care for the Greeks as friends and relatives and the barbarians like plants or animals" (τοῖς μὲν Ἑλλήσιν ἡγεμονικῶς τοῖς δὲ βαρβάροις δεσποτικῶς χρώμενος, καὶ τῶν μὲν ὡς φίλων καὶ οἰκείων ἐπιμελόμενος τοῖς δ' ὡς ζώοις ἢ φυτοῖς προσφερόμενος), Alexander told the whole world of Greeks and barbarians alike to think of the entire inhabited earth as their fatherland (πατρίδα μὲν τὴν οἰκουμένην προσέταξεν ἡγεῖσθαι).

Following A.N. Sherwin-White's observation that Aelius Aristides' praise of the Romans' πατρίς κοινὴ παντῶ in *To Rome* (*Or.* 14.225) comes directly from the Roman idea of *communis patria*³³—a euphemism for what we would call "Romanization" or colonization—I suggested in my earlier article that Plutarch's particular use of οἰκουμένην was similarly Romanizing, and compared it to its use in two other Roman *Lives*: those of Pompey and Caesar. Plutarch describes Pompey, for example, as having subdued (ὑπὲρχθαι) the whole world (τὴν οἰκουμένην) by his three triumphs (*Life of Pompey* 45.5). The word ὑπάγω is interesting, as it is often used of yoking animals—it is as if, when conquered by Pompey, the entire world became simply one of Aristotle's ζῶοι-barbarians. If the latter's treatment of the οἰκουμένην was violent, Caesar's movement beyond the οἰκουμένην comes in the context of failure, as he did not succeed in capturing Britain, which island was "unbelievable for its size ... and in attempting to occupy it he carried the Roman hegemony beyond the inhabited world: προήγαγεν ἔξω τῆς οἰκουμένης τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν" (*Life of Caesar* 23.2). It is Alexander alone who conquers the entire world and unites it under the peaceful banner of *humanitas*.³⁴

32 See n. 4 above.

33 A.N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 428–429.

34 A fascinating mini-parallel to the pair of Alexander and Caesar is the pair of Cimon and Lucullus. In the *Life of Cimon* 3.1–2, Plutarch describes both men as men of war (πολεμικοί) who were brilliant against the barbarians (πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους λαμπροί) but mild when it came to political affairs (πρᾶξι δὲ τὰ πολιτικά): they led their countries out of civil strife (ἐμφυλίων στάσεων ἀναπνοὴν ταῖς πατρίσι παρασχόντες) while still winning trophies and famous victories (στήσαντες τρόπαια καὶ νίκας ἀνελόμενοι περιβοήτους). Plutarch also notes that no Hellene before Cimon and no Roman before Lucullus carried his wars into

The privileging of Alexander over Caesar³⁵ is especially interesting considering Trajan's own admiration of Caesar.³⁶ I shall conclude with one more example of Plutarch's "co-option" on behalf of Alexander, in which a brief scene in the *Life of Alexander* can be compared to one *Life of Caesar*. In the *Life of Alexander* 37, having taken Persepolis Alexander encounters a fallen statue of Xerxes. Speaking aloud to the statue, he asks whether he should allow it to lie on the ground as punishment for Xerxes's expedition against the Greeks or, alternatively, if he should stand it up again in honour of the Persian king's magnanimity (μεγαλοφροσύνη) and virtue (ἀρετή). He leaves it to lie. This scene seems to mix an old trope (as old as the *Iliad*) of the warrior who honours his "noble enemy" with a new trope in which the conquering hero surpasses a dead conqueror who is represented in his absence by a monument. The story of Alexander and Xerxes's statue is not found elsewhere in either the Hellenistic or Roman sources. Arrian tells a more straightforwardly "panhellenist" story, in which Alexander sends statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton that had been taken by Xerxes back to Athens (3.16.7–8; see also Pliny, *NH* 34.70; other sources say this was done by Antiochus or Seleucus). The origin of the image of Xerxes as μεγαλοφροσύνη is found in Herodotus (7.24.1),³⁷ but Alexander's encounter with Xerxes's statue seems more closely related to the Roman practice of acquiring and displaying spoils from conquered peoples—including statues and images of Alexander. According to Pliny the Elder, Nero acquired

such remote lands (οὕτω μακρὰν πολεμῶν προήλθεν) except for Heracles, Dionysus, Perseus and Jason. Like Alexander, these men have earned for their conquests comparison with Greek heroes (Heracles in particular arises frequently in positive relation to Alexander in Plutarch), but Cimon and Lucullus also have two negative attributes in common with each other that they do not share with Alexander: first, a lack of completion in their campaigns (τὸ ἀτελές ... τῆς στρατηγίας); second, the fact that each wore down their opponents without completely destroying them (ἐκατέρου μὲν συντρίψαντος, οὐδετέρου δὲ καταλύσαντος τὸν ἀνταγωνιστήν).

35 See also Bradley Buszard's article "Caesar's Ambition: A Combined Reading of Plutarch's Alexander-Caesar and Pyrrhus-Marius", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 138:1 (2008): 185–215, in which the author demonstrates how Plutarch treats Caesar's ambition as more problematic than Alexander's.

36 Joseph Geiger ("Zum Bild Julius Caesars in der Römisch Kaiserzeit", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 24:3 (1975), 444–453) demonstrates, using literary and numismatic evidence, that the idea that it was Julius Caesar, and not Augustus, who was the "first" Caesar originated under Trajan. The latter's admiration of Caesar may also be implied by his adoption of the title *Invictus*, which was previously used by Caesar (Stefan Weinstock, "Victor and Invictus", *The Harvard Theological Review* 50:3 (1957), 241).

37 For whom the term less ambiguously connotes "arrogance": Emma Bridges, *Imagining Xerxes: Ancient Perspectives on a Persian King* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 122.

a statue of Alexander as youth, which he had covered in gold (*NH* 34.63), and Claudius had the face of Augustus superimposed on Alexander's face in two paintings by Apelles (*NH* 35.36.93–4). And the poet Statius made reference to Caesar himself replacing the head of an Alexander-statue by Lysippos with this own: *Cedat equus, Latiae qui contra templa Diones / Caesarei stat sede fori—quem traderis ausus / Pellaeo, Lysippe, duci, mox Caesaris ora / mirata cervice tulit* ("Let the steed yield, who stands in Caesar's Forum, facing Latian Dione's temple; whom you are said to have dared to make for Alexander, Lysippus; now he carries the face of Caesar on his marvelling back", *Silv.* 1.1.84–7).

If the last story is true, it is one of the only real pieces of evidence for Caesar's imitation of or rivalry with Alexander; the evidence for Caesar's overall consciousness concerning the Macedonian king is otherwise quite thin.³⁸ Of course, this does not stop ancient authors from fostering a comparison between the two, as we can see in Plutarch pairing of Alexander and Caesar in the *Lives*. Some also attributed Alexander-*aemulatio*, or rivalry, to Caesar; hence, a surely fictional story of Caesar's encounter with an Alexander-icon in Spain, which acts in parallel to Alexander's encounter with Xerxes's statue in *Life of Alexander*.³⁹ Unlike the Alexander/Xerxes story, the story of Caesar's encounter with Alexander appears in Suetonius⁴⁰ and Cassius Dio.⁴¹ In both passages, Caesar encounters Alexander's statue in the temple of Her-

38 Kühnen, *Die imitatio Alexandri als politisches Instrument*, 88–89; 99–100 accepts the Statius story as possibly true. For a brief summary of scholarly positions on whether or not Caesar wished to emulate Alexander see Peter Green, "Caesar and Alexander: Aemulatio, Imitatio, Comparatio", in *Classical Bearings: Interpreting Ancient History and Culture*, ed. Peter Green (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 193–209. (Green is on the side of "no", as are most scholars nowadays.)

39 There is also the famous negative (also fictional) example found in Lucan, where Caesar visits the tomb of the "crazed offspring of Philip" (*proles vesana Philippi: Pharsalia* 10.20) in Egypt.

40 Suetonius, *Caesar* 7: *Quaestori ulterior Hispania obvenit; ubi cum mandatu praetoris iure dicundo conventus circumiret Gadisque venisset, animadversa apud Herculis templum Magni Alexandri imagine ingemuit et quasi pertaesus ignaviam suam, quod nihil dum a se memorabile actum esset in aetate, qua iam Alexander orbem terrarum subegisset, missionem continuo efflagitavit ad captandas quam primum maiorum rerum occasiones in urbe.*

41 Cassius Dio 37.52.2: *ζηλῶν, οὐδὲν ὀλίγον ἐφρόνει, ἀλλ' ἡλιπίζεν, ἂν τι τότε κατεργάσῃται, ὑπατός τε εὐθὺς αἰρεθήσεσθαι καὶ ὑπερφυᾶ ἔργα ἀποδείξεσθαι, διὰ τε τὰλλα καὶ ὅτι ἐν τοῖς Γαδείροις, ὅτε ἔταμίευε, τῇ μητρὶ συγγίγνεσθαι ὄναρ ἔδοξε, καὶ παρὰ τῶν μάντεων ἔμαθεν ὅτι ἐν μεγάλῃ δυνάμει ἔσται. ὁθενπερ καὶ εἰκόνα Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐνταῦθα ἐν τῷ Ἡρακλέους ἀνακειμένην ἰδὼν ἀνεστέναιξε, καὶ κατωδύρατο ὅτι μηδὲν πω μέγα ἔργον ἐπεποιήκει.*

cules in Gades and laments that he has not accomplished as much as Alexander had at his age. In *Life of Caesar* 11, however, Plutarch has Caesar make this lament while *reading* from a history of Alexander at leisure: σχολῆς οὔσης ἀναγινώσκοντά τι τῶν περὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου γεγραμμένων. The difference between Plutarch's version of Caesar's encounter with Alexander and those of Suetonius and Cassius Dio is striking: while the latter two show Caesar having an active encounter with the monument of a deceased predecessor, Alexander in the Heracles-temple, Plutarch makes Caesar's encounter with Alexander quite passive. Also striking is the distinction between this passive version of Caesar's encounter with Alexander and Alexander's active encounter with the monument of a deceased predecessor, Xerxes, in the *Life of Alexander*—which, again, is a Plutarchan invention. While Alexander—as the one who has taken over the mantle of world-power from Xerxes—is allowed to take a position of superiority towards Xerxes, Plutarch allows Caesar to admire Alexander through literature (perhaps to be read as a self-Hellenizing action) but not to dominate Alexander as potential “spoils”, the “noble enemy”, that he has surpassed. By co-opting aspects of Caesar's conquering persona for Alexander, Plutarch seems to suggest that the Romans cannot live up to him any better than the Hellenistic kings. Despite the tragic downfall of his character in the *Life*, in the larger scheme of things, Plutarch's Alexander is the only world conqueror who has remained “unconquered”—that is, unsurpassed—even into the Trajanic present.

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PART 2

*Later Receptions in the Near- and
Far-East and the Romance Tradition*



Alexander in the Jewish tradition: From Second Temple Writings to Hebrew *Alexander Romances*

Aleksandra Klęczar

“Each age makes his own Alexander”, Richard Stoneman wrote in the introduction to his own translation of the *Greek Alexander Romance*.¹ The post-Alexander world would return to his character over and over, to illustrate a number of various and conflicting features. The king would obviously be recalled by numerous Greek and Roman writers in their works, but the reflected memory of his deeds and life was preserved in the histories of numerous other cultures, and not necessarily only the ones that he personally encountered. The Jews, the majority of whom lived on the lands conquered by Alexander and who were directly affected by his actions, were one of these cultures.

Sometimes under the influence of other traditions and sometimes independently, Alexander’s story was also told by, and for, the Jews. In fact, it started to be distributed in the Jewish circles very early on. The earliest written accounts on Alexander in Jewish tradition are older than the ones we have preserved from the Greco-Roman world. They start with the appearance of Alexander in the historical and prophetic narratives of the Second Temple period. In one of the most recognizable prophetic biblical passages, the Book of Daniel represents Alexander as a warrior he-goat conquering the previous imperial power and ruling over the world; in a similar context he appears in Book III of the *Sibylline Oracles*, one of the parts of the *Oracles* that was quite certainly composed in the Jewish *milieu*. Alexander’s image in 1 Maccabees, presented in short but poignant passages, is similarly connected with power, but set within a rather negative context of the rise of hubristic and inimical power of the Seleucid state. The fragmentarily preserved treatise *On the Jews* by pseudo-Hecataeus also recalls, in a number of passages, the person and deeds of Alexander, presenting him in the context of the Jews and their obedience to the Law. Later, after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, the character of the Macedonian king became an object of special interest for Josephus, who

1 Richard Stoneman, *The Greek Alexander Romance*, (London: Penguin 1991), 2.

mentions him a number of times in his works and devotes to him an important chapter in Book XI of his *Jewish Antiquities*.

There is a set of rather fascinating stories about Alexander in the *Talmud* and in the Midrashic narratives. Some of the episodes repeat the stories known from Greek and Roman sources, but often with differences in details or with different focus and meaning, and it is a common consensus that they stem rather from an independent oral source than from a reworking of a literary Greek text. Such is the story in the tractate *Tamid* 31b–32a (Alexander in dispute with the Elders of the South, an equivalent of the disputation with the Gymnosophists, found in Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* 64–65 and in the *Romance* III, 6). Other cases include the Talmudic versions of narratives known otherwise from different Jewish sources, like the story of Alexander in Jerusalem, appearing both in Josephus and in the Rabbinic tradition² or those shared (often with changes included) with the *Romance* tradition: *Tamid* 32a contains the stories of Alexander's journey to the land of darkness, of his encounter with the Amazons and of Alexander at the gates of paradise, all of which appear also in the *Romance*.³ Other material in common for the *Romance* and Rabbinic writings includes the stories of Alexander's ascent into the air⁴ and his descent to the bottom of the sea.⁵ Among the stories there are also some that do not have a direct equivalent in the existing Greek Alexander literature such as the story of the King of Kazia, present in a number of version in Talmudic literature,⁶ the story of the throne of Solomon⁷ and the narrative about the bones of the prophet Jeremiah.⁸

In the late Middle Ages (12th–14th c.), a number of Hebrew versions of the *Alexander Romance* emerged. They differ very much between one another and it is enough to compare the (relatively) sober account of *Sefer Toledot*

2 *Megillat Ta'anit* 9, *Yoma* 69a, *Genesis Rabbah* LXI, 7.

3 The Land of Darkness: *Alexander Romance* β II, 39–41; see also *Iter ad paradisum*; the Amazons: III, 25–26.

4 *Abodah Zarah* III, 1, 42c, *Numbers Rabbah* 13, 4, *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* II, 28b–29a, *Yalkut Shimoni* to 1 Kings, 18.

5 *Midrash Tehilim* Ps. 93, 5, *Yalkut Shimoni* Ps. 93, 848 (in both cases the deed is ascribed to Hadrian, but follows the typical set of motifs from the story about Alexander's descent and the knowledge of this incident as connected with Alexander is evident from other Rabbinic sources: *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* II, 28b–29a, *Yalkut Shimoni* to 1 Kings, 18, which mention the sea adventure of Alexander in connection with his other exploits).

6 *Baba Mezia* II, 5, 8c; *Genesis Rabbah* 33, 1; *Pesikta de-Reb Kahana* 9, 24; *Leviticus Rabbah* 27, 1; *Midrash Tanhuma* Emor 6, *Yalkut Shimoni* Ps. 36, 727.

7 *Targum Sheni* I, 2.

8 The story of the bones of Jeremiah: *Midrash Haggadah Numbers*, 30, 15.

Alexandros Ha-Makdoni by Immanuel ben Jacob Bonfils with the fanciful and utterly fantastic set of stories presented in the Oxford and Modena versions and in the lost Damascus one; the latter are, conversely, different still from the versions known from MSS Paris and London as well as from the passages in *Yosippon*, originating from the *Romance*. The Hebrew versions of the *Romance* are an interesting case for a study: as much as they do differ from one another, they nevertheless each form a part of a large transcultural tradition, constantly incorporating, appropriating and reworking themes and motifs, while being grounded, at the same time, in a set of common core characters and stories. Thus, they allow a careful reader to observe both continuity and change in the development of each of the Hebrew *Romances* and to determine to what extent the continued and the changed is connected with the demands of the social, cultural and generic conditions of its origins.

The enumeration above shows clearly that Alexander is a relatively frequent guest in the pages of Jewish literature from the Hellenistic period onwards and that the representations of Alexander in Jewish culture are diverse and intriguing. Their origins are varied—despite superficial similarities there are no obvious connection or surely traceable developments between, say, Josephus, the Rabbinic narratives and the specific Jewish elements introduced into the *Romance*. The stories belong to different genres and were composed with various aims in mind and for varied audiences, both Jewish and (at least in case of Josephus) non-Jewish. Therefore it seems proper to look at the singular texts within their own cultural contexts (spatial, temporal, cultural, religious, political ...) and also in the broader, more general perspective, to shed some light at the faces and aspects of Alexander's portrayal within the Jewish culture through the ages. Such an approach seems reasonable also because there is a number of recurrent motifs that can be observed in the entirety of Hebrew Alexander literature. Three of them: Alexander marking an end of an era in history, Alexander as a universal ruler and Alexander in debate with wise men (or, indeed, women), seem especially interesting.

The concept of Alexander not only making, but also marking history can be detected in Jewish literature from the very beginning of the Macedonian king's presence within it, namely in 1 Maccabees 1–10. The story of Alexander in 1 Maccabees is short and concise. The narrative, covering Alexander's rise to power and his career opens the narrative in its currently known Greek form, serving as a preface to the main topic (the war with Antiochus and the emergence of the Maccabee family). The history of Alexander is told here in the terms setting his life and his mission within the paradigm of a universal king; its rather significant feature is the role of Alexander in delineating the events.

Specifically, the figure of Alexander is used here to mark a beginning of a new era. With his conquest, a new epoch of rule and rulers starts. The passage lists a number of names of persons, peoples and places—Alexander, Philip, Darius, Macedon, Greece, *Kittim*, Persians, Medes—as well as sequence of nameless nations, countries, princes and kings (βασιλείς, τύραννοι). Their presence, together with the fact that they are used to delineate dynastic and geographical relations, carefully places the events following in the subsequent chapters in time and space. The image of Alexander as a universal ruler is combined here with a suggestion that Alexander's hubristic rule (line 3: ἐπήρθη ἡ καρδία αὐτοῦ) is only a starting point of the deteriorating sequence of kings. After Alexander hands down his power to his παῖδες, officers-successors (line 6), they start their own period of rule over the conquered lands (line 8), subsequently becoming kings (line 9) and starting their own dynasties (line 9). The evil suggested in the description of Alexander's hubris is spelled out clearly when the generation of his successors' descendants is mentioned. The concept of evil inherent in the rule of the *Kittim* kings is finally declared when, in line 10, we come to the *sinful root*, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who is to be the main villain of the historic-propagandistic tale ahead of us. The initial part of 1 Maccabees forms a narrative sequence which links two kings: Alexander and Antiochus, via the successors who are not named but whose identities must have been perceived as obvious. The kings ruling between Alexander and Antiochus are steps in the progression of evil: Alexander's conquest and his rule over the *oikoumene*, presented in v. 1–9, seems to acquire new and sinister meaning here. He becomes a precursor and beginner, a symbolic father, through his παῖδες, of generations of wicked kings that ended in the most malicious king of all.

The construction of 1 Maccabees points at the validity of such a role ascribed to the Macedonian king. The circular elements in the construction of the chapter seem to strengthen such a notion. While the story of the wickedness in the land of Israel starts with Alexander and continues with his successors, this wickedness is punished with the death of Antiochus (1 Macc. 6:8–16). Alexander is the ostensible reason for Antiochus' decision to conquer the city of Elymais in Persia: the king is tempted by the presence, in the temple in Elymais, of Alexander's treasures and personal relics. The historicity of these events, including the date and place of Antiochus' death, is debatable, but the use that the authors of 1 Maccabees make of the fact is quite significant, connecting the subsequent death of Antiochus the persecutor with that of Alexander. The sequence of events is, in many ways, similar. Both Alexander and Antiochus conclude that they are about to die. Both call their associates and decide the succession. In both cases the length of their rule is stated. The main difference lies in the fact that while Alexander's realization of approaching his death is

just mentioned, Antiochus' is marked by him confessing his misdemeanours and making a speech in which he acknowledges his mistreatment of the Jews as a reason for his misfortunes. One may argue that the elements mentioned here in connection with the death of both kings are rather typical for the biblical descriptions of the last moments of royal figures,⁹ but it does not change the fact that within the narrative of 1 Maccabees the reader would probably be reminded of the scene of Alexander's death when reading the account of the demise of Antiochus.

When seen with this in mind, the presence of Alexander in 1 Maccabees, albeit small, turns out to be rather significant. At the same time his role here is limited: in addition to being a universal ruler and a king *par excellence*, he serves also as a figure delimiting an era with his arrival and starting a line of succession of (evil) kings, a progression of wickedness.

The notion that Alexander's reign started a new era in history, particularly Jewish history, will later appear very often in Jewish and Christian writings. Amitay in his discussion on Alexander and the end of prophecy¹⁰ recalls two passages from previously discussed 1 Maccabees. One of them is 14:41, the other is 44–46.

Both these passages imply that in the time of the Maccabees it was commonly believed that true prophets no longer appeared among the Jews. While nowhere in the 1 Maccabees is it explicitly stated that it was in the time of Alexander that prophetic activity ended, the later works prove the existence of such a notion at least among the Jewish intellectual elite in the 1st c. CE. It is worth recalling, in this context, the following passage from *Seder Olam*,¹¹ a Rabbinic text of clearly chronographic character, which interprets biblical material in order to make it possible to clearly describe the *history* (understood as dating and periodization) of the Jewish people. The presence of Alexander in *Seder Olam* is connected clearly with the main purpose of the book. Firstly, he is named as the king under whose rule the period of prophecy in Israel ended and the times of the wise men began. His coming is predicted by the prophecy of Daniel—once more it becomes quite obvious that Daniel's vision is crucial

9 See e.g. 1 Kings 2, on David on his deathbed deciding matters and giving advice to Solomon, his son and heir.

10 Ory Amitay, *From Alexander to Jesus*, 112–113. On the debate whether the prophecy did end in the Second Temple period see e.g.: Benjamin D. Sommer, "Did Prophecy Cease? Evaluating a Reevaluation", *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 115, No. 1, Spring, 1996, 31–47, with extended bibliography in the text.

11 *Seder Olam* 30; translation quoted: Heinrich W. Guggenheimer, *Seder Olam: the Rabbinic View of Biblical Chronology*, London—Boulder—New York—Toronto—Oxford 1998.

for the presence of this aspect of Alexander in Jewish tradition; later on the author of the chronology passes to the discussion of the times of Alexander and the end of prophecy. The words quoted above spell it out quite clearly: until the time of Alexander, Israel had prophets whose words the people could follow. From his time on, however, the authority of the prophets was replaced with that of wise men and elders; such an understanding is supported by the biblical quotations proving the point, as is elsewhere in *Seder Olam*. The era of the prophets ended with Alexander and with him the times of the sages started. Amitay¹² states—absolutely rightly, in my opinion—that the association of Alexander with the temporal end of prophecy situates him right in the middle of a crucial historiosophical concept: a new era starts with the onset of his kingdom, and when it will end, it would mean that the end of the world, the coming of the Messiah and the ultimate change is near. Such an understanding of the figure and role of Alexander ascribes to him a special role in world history: that of the precursor of the Messiah and the harbinger of the last age of the world. Once again, we see the figure of the Macedonian conqueror used to mark a time or an era, only this time with a more eschatological undertones.

This special role of Alexander as a king associated with the prophetic vision and at the same time with World Empire is most famously explained in the Book of Daniel. In fact, in all probability Alexander's eschatological associations in Jewish literature of the period could be linked to his appearance in the prophecy in the Book of Daniel. The complicated history of its creation makes it rather difficult to date the Alexander material that it contains. Anyway, the prophecy of Daniel which sees Alexander and his state as one of the world empires became—due to Daniel's status within both Jewish and Christian biblical canon—the second among Jewish narratives on Alexander, as far as its influence within Jewish culture and outside of it is concerned.

There are three visions in Daniel which could be associated, to some degree, with Macedonian empire and/or Alexander. In Daniel 2:31–45, the king's vision of the mighty statue made of mixed materials is interpreted—after the failure of other prophets—by Daniel as pertaining to the succession of world empires; elsewhere in the prophecy, as we know, one of the world empires is clearly associated with Macedonia, so it is not impossible that a similar association is present here. The second vision, in Daniel 7, describes another apocalyptic scene, four mythical beasts coming out of the sea. This time, it is a dream of Daniel himself, one that he himself also interprets. The crucial moment,

12 Amitay, *From Alexander to Jesus*, 110–112.

from the point of view of Alexander tradition, is the appearance of the fourth beast, “terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong” (7:7), with iron teeth set to devour everything in its view and mighty feet to trample all that is left. This beast, different from the rest, is quite universally interpreted as signifying the Hellenistic, post-Macedonian kingdoms. The crucial vision, however is the one in Daniel 8. It describes two creatures, a ram and a goat, fighting. The he-goat, having won the fight, grows exceedingly great, but during this process of growth his biggest horn breaks apart and is replaced by four smaller ones. All these developments are cruel and hubristic, and despite their ostensible power, ultimately destined to fall. If the main motif of this part of the prophecy seems to be the growth of human world empires, the underlying theme is that of God’s power and his ultimate triumph over the imperial creations of men. The pride of Alexander—a vice of his mentioned also in 1 Maccabees—appears also here as a quality ascribed to both him and his kingdom.

The visions in Daniel 7 and 8 are focused quite clearly on the final result of what we see—that is, on Antiochus Epiphanes and his persecution of the Jews. The confrontation between the kingdom of Epiphanes and its forerunners, the world empires with special attention paid to Alexander, is undoubtedly one of the major themes in these passages. And while in the prophecies of Daniel the sequence of empires is of crucial importance, the arrival of Alexander is marked as a special event, or at least a central one in a sequence of events. A similarity of concept with 1 Maccabees and with its idea of Alexander as a starting point of a period of time which would end with the ascension of Antiochus and finally, in the long term, lead to the triumph of God and the end of days, seems quite important here. The apocalyptic visions in Daniel 7 and 8 are strongly rooted in the politics of the day (even if they strive to present themselves as prophecies), but at the same time they reach beyond, in time and space, and create a link between the era that started with Alexander (or with his antecedent, the Persian empire) and would last until the kingdom of God.

The prophetic vision concerning the rule—and role—of Alexander in Jewish history appears also in one of the notoriously problematic texts of the Second Temple period, namely the *Sibylline Oracles*. The collection of oracles, ascribed to the prophetess Sybil and varied radically as far as the origins and date of composition of singular parts of the work are concerned, is rather difficult to pinpoint chronologically, but relatively unified as far as the genre is concerned. The generic character of the oracles of Jewish Sybil situates them very strongly within the tradition of *vaticinium ex eventu*, similar to what can be found in Daniel. Book III, which is of interest here, combines the interest in politics with a strong moralistic and ethical-religious message. At the

same time, one of the main tendencies in *Oracula* is the division of history into periods, parts and generations, each of them carefully defined and delineated. Alexander, as often in Jewish Hellenistic writings, serves as a representative of one of these periods and as a person marking a certain moment in history.

In the passage from Book III, devoted to Macedon and Alexander, the first thing that draws attention are certain motifs in common with the image in Daniel 7. The image of the Diadochi as horns, with the one on the side finally triumphing and taking power, is one of these common motifs; the division of history into four periods ruled by four empires is another. Of greater interest here is a general setting of the prophecy and its character, visible especially well in the broader context of the book. Typical for the *Oracula Sibyllina* is the kind of prophecy that suggests inevitable disasters to come in a determined and defined future. The section in *Sibylline* 3 containing the prophecy on Alexander (lines 295–488) deals mainly with the punishments for various nations. Among them the author/redactor of the book placed also Macedon, represented mainly by Alexander.

The description of Macedonians as descendants of Cronus associates them directly with universal dominion, bravery—and cruel wars. This generalized portrayal serves as a link between the description of Macedonians' ancestor, Cronus, and their most famous, and, within the frame of the prophecy, most representative scion, Alexander himself. The Alexander prophecy does not follow the introductory statement on the Macedonians directly. The current redaction of the book has these two portions separated: the initial prophecy on the historical roles and fates of various nations, including the Macedonians, is only later expanded in a series of prophetic utterances on their destinies. The second part of the prophecy starts in v. 295. It discusses terrible fates threatening various nations, among them the Macedonians. Alexander is then introduced as a Macedonian king. A curious and rather intriguing feature of his description here is the strong focus on identifiable historical details which could be traced down to accounts on Alexander in biographies. The allusion to the thunder begetting him in v. 391–392 or the dynastic complications concerning the fate of his only son (v. 396–397) clearly show that the author of the prophecies was familiar with certain facts from the popular histories of Alexander. Other comments, like the allusions to Alexander's purple royal cloak (v. 389) or to his dominion over the world, may, in addition to their possible historical meaning, suggest the theme of Alexander's universal reign. The author of the *Oracula* places Alexander within a certain set of associations, seeing him primarily as a warrior king, whose cruel wars would mark another era in a sequence of events decided by God and prophesized at His behest. Once again

we see the character of Alexander as a landmark in history, defining and demarcating. It is worth noticing, however, that in general the image of the king in *Oracula Sibyllina* is at the same time more historicized and rather more negative than in other works of the Jewish literature of the period.

Another narrative which might associate Alexander with eschatological themes and with marking beginnings/ends of historical periods is the story of the gate of Alexander and of the Unclean People locked behind it. The story of the gate (or wall) of Alexander is a staple feature of the *Alexander Romance*—and, since the Jewish versions of the *Romance* are, to a greater or lesser extent, dependent on the other, especially Arabic, Syriac and Latin ones, it is only to be expected that the story would find its way also into the Hebrew *Romance* tradition.

Alexander's role as the founder of what became known as the Gates of Alexander and, in more general terms, as the one who defends the Unclean Nations/Gog and Magog is one of the crucial parts associated with him in Medieval literature and culture. In the episode Alexander defeats the nations of Goth, Magoth and their twenty associates and then, recognizing them as uncivilized, barbaric in their way of life and generally a threat to the order of things—a threat that could “come out and pollute the inhabited world”¹³—he prayed to God and asked for the two mountains, which were previously eighteen feet apart, to come close and permanently lock the passage. Alexander built a gate there and made it safe against fire and assault and then he planted the brambles all around so that the crossing of the gate was even more difficult.

The association of Alexander with defeating all kinds of dangerous monsters—a heroic activity par excellence¹⁴—is mentioned throughout the ancient sources on the conqueror, with episodes presenting such activity of the king set at various stages of his conquest. However, for the Jewish tradition (and, conversely, also for the Christian one) Alexander as the conqueror of evil is crucial mostly due to his association with the Unclean Nations and the Gate of Alexander.

The story as it is told in the γ recension of the *Romance* has a strong monotheistic colouring and its importance for the later tradition lies, it seems, in its biblical connotations. The story of Alexander's encounter with the Unclean Nations was merged with the biblical narrative on Gog and Magog. These figures/names as such have an interesting if rather mysterious history and are

13 Richard Stoneman, *Greek Alexander*, 187.

14 Richard Stoneman, *Alexander the Great. A Life in Legend*, 171–172.

known from a number of Hebrew Bible sources¹⁵ and some additional places in LXX,¹⁶ as well as from the Book of Revelations.¹⁷ The Gog and/or Magog, not necessarily in the context of Alexander, also appear in several Jewish literary works of the Second Temple period.

Within the tradition of Alexander the special meaning of Gog and Magog comes from associating them with the Unclean Nations. The question remains, however, to what extent does this triple set of associations—Alexander, the gate enclosing the Unclean Nations, Gog and Magog and the end of days—work in the Jewish literary and specifically *Romance* traditions. And, as it turns out, the motif of the Gog and Magog is not at all universally associated with Alexander and his gate in Jewish tradition.

It is particularly interesting that, according to Pfister,¹⁸ the very motif of the gate is of Jewish provenance (Josephus being the oldest source to quote it) and only from the Jewish tradition did it spread to the Christian and Islamic ones. Pfister's belief in the Jewish origins of the motif is not universally shared: its provenance is a topic of debate among scholars and not everyone agrees with Pfister's assessment of the concept as Jewish in origins.¹⁹ It seems rather reasonable to believe that whatever its origins were, it has gained importance mainly due to its Christian elaborations, most notably Pseudo-Methodius. It is to a great extent through his *Apocalypse* that the Gog and Magog story became associated with the gate of Alexander motif and took on eschatological proportions and meanings. From there on, it has found its way into the γ recension of the *Alexander Romance* to become, in time, one of the universally known narratives in Medieval Europe.

The case of Jewish culture is, in this case, rather intriguing. The association of Alexander with the iron gate built somewhere at the supposed end of the world is present already in Josephus (*Bellum*, VII, 244–245). Josephus' comment on the gate is brief and of minor importance for his entire narrative and it is only mentioned here to show that the inclusion of the gate of Alexander motif in Jewish tradition reaches rather far into the past. The story of the gate of Alexander has also made its way into the Jewish versions of the *Alexander*

15 Gog and Magog: Gen 10:2, Ezechiel 38:1–4.

16 See see Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, on the insertion of Gog and Magog in Amos (pp. 61–70) and the LXX version of Ezechiel (133–135).

17 *Revelations* 20:7–9.

18 Friedrich Pfister, *Kleine Schriften zum Alexanderroman*, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie Heft 61 (Meisenheim 1976).

19 Contra Pfister see, first and foremost, the classic work of A.R. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, MA) 1932.

Romance. However, it is rather surprising to notice that the apocalyptic associations are nearly absent from these particular renditions of the *Romance* and that the Gog and Magog associations are not a part of the story in its Jewish versions.

Also interesting is the fact that the most fanciful and fantastic of the *Hebrew Romance* versions, listed by scholars in the type 3 of *Romances*, the Gog and Magog/Gate of Alexander narrative does not, in fact, appear. These texts, quite specific and very original in their selection of the Alexander material, abound in fantastic elements and motifs; however, the story of the gate of Alexander has not been included here.

In the *Sefer Toledot Alexandros ha-Makdoni*, the translation of *Romance* made by Immanuel ben Jacob Bonfil, the episode with the gate is quite elaborated. Having seized the Persian crown and married Roxane, Alexander assembles his forces and moves against the people of Hyrcania and Milyas (most probably Lycia or Caria). In fighting them, he encounters a “despised and lowly people”,²⁰ skilled in magic and prone to all kinds of transgressions, most of all dealing with impurity (they eat forbidden things, they do not bury their dead, and they practice cannibalism). They are, at the same time, rather formidable enemies, mostly because they instil fear in the hearts of the Macedonian and Persian warrior. It takes a personal intervention from Alexander to finally force the army to fight—and once they are convinced to start fighting, they emerge victorious. Having defeated the enemies, Alexander makes them gather together with their wives and children and then commands that they must be lead to the valley in the north, situated between two mountains, high enough to reach the heavens. Then he constructs a building between the mountains and there, beyond the “bronze gates and iron bars”,²¹ he locks the conquered nation before proceeding to the Caspian Gates and to the war against the Albanians.²² Interestingly enough, the eschatological speculations are entirely absent from this passage, nor are the Unclean People (apparently one nation, in this case) identified with the Gog and Magog story. The story of the gate of Alexander in this rationalizing and historicizing version of the narrative. Alexander in this passage is described as a leader—both military and civilian—but not as a visionary or a man inspired by God; even the scene of the prayer, present in the γ recension of the *Romance*, is absent here. Alexander’s concerns are more political than ethical (he worries that the evil of the Unclean People might

20 Kazis, *Sefer Toledot*, p. 114 (*Sefer Toledot* chapter 77).

21 Kazis, *Sefer Toledot*, p. 114 (*Sefer Toledot* chapter 77).

22 Kazis, *Sefer Toledot*, p. 115 (*Sefer Toledot* chapter 77).

spread to his own lands) and his action against them is of a military character—he subdues the enemies in battle and then relocates them, forcing them to stay in a place he designed for them, not unlike the historical monarchs would do (Babylonian exile comes to mind as an example of such an action). Notably, it is Alexander himself who builds the gate—no divine intervention making the mountains come together is necessary in this particular version of the narrative.

The version of the narrative is slightly different in the London²³ and Paris²⁴ manuscripts, representing a different variation of the Hebrew *Alexander Romance*. Here, in both cases (the texts are rather similar to each other), Alexander marches to the *extreme East* and then he finds nations looking even stranger and more terrible than the ones encountered by him previously; their horrible appearance is matched by their unclean and appalling dietary habits. Alexander gives an order to kill all of the defeated people, but then changes his mind. Instead, he has them led into a valley between two great mountains. The people are placed there and the mountains, thanks to Alexander's prayer to God, move closer to each other, so that only a space of twelve miles was between them. Then the king orders that a number of metals be mixed (iron, lead and bronze) and poured into the space between the mountains to create a barrier impossible to breach and to enclose the people there forever. The narrative here differs in significant details from the version of the story in *Sefer Toledot*: in comparison, the fantastic element is more pronounced in the MS London and Paris versions and the gate/wall as such has more mythic character and dimensions.

The story of the gate of Alexander in the Jewish versions of the *Romance* remains associated rather with certain geographical and historical facts than with the end of days and biblical enemies of God. If we want to look for the eschatological significance of Alexander—significance often ascribed in other sources to him building the gate and locking the Unclean Nations there until the last days—we need to look, as far as the Jewish literature is concerned, rather at Alexander's associations with the end of prophecy or the beginning of the new world empire, and thus with a change of an era, rather than at the Unclean Nations episode.

It is, after all, not very surprising that it was Alexander, of all historical foreign kings, who became, for the Jewish authors, a character so often associated with the breakthrough moments of history and whose times were seen as a

23 MS London, 36 (van Bakkum, *MS London*, 118–119).

24 MS Paris 260a (van Bakkum, *MS Paris*, 77).

period of special significance. The historical facts about Alexander's rule and the changes it introduced would provide an ample set of reasons for such a treatment and it is perfectly conceivable that such a person as Alexander would be used to demarcate and also to legitimize dates of certain events or their historicity. At the same time, this very treatment would, in many cases, disassociate Alexander from the historical circumstances of his rule and place him rather in the sphere of the eschatological.

The second important motif in Jewish culture's appraisal of Alexander is his image as a universal king, whose dominion and power exceeds the limitations of other rulers. Alexander's association with prophecy, especially with Daniel's prophetic visions, as well as with the End of Days weighs heavily on his image as the universal king in Jewish tradition. The prophecy situates him within the ranks of kings whose position is rather special, those whose rule encompasses the entire world. The apocalyptic qualities of Alexander's reign, positioning him often as the last of the world rulers and linking his dominion and his actions, such as the enclosing of the Unclean Nations, make his a special case among the kings in Jewish tradition.

Of special importance for the representations of Alexander, with which we want to deal here, is the biblical idea of a benevolent foreign king, ruling, by God's will, the world empire, part of which is Israel. The idea itself is not always, as Gruen proves, treated with full reverence: more often the not, she notes, the images of powerful foreign rulers controlling Israel (Cyrus, Alexander) can be read with more than a little subversive irony: they are tools in the hands of God, but no more than tools, indeed, and without God and without their Jewish advisors it is not much that they actually could do.²⁵ As a universal ruler and a foreign king of the Jews, Alexander would inevitably be compared to other royal figures, both Jewish and foreign, of similar stature. The obvious comparison in, of course, Cyrus the Great, but there is also an interesting range of similarities between Alexander and Solomon.

The biblical representation of Cyrus share a number of features with those of Alexander: both are seen as chosen by God and, in fact, instruments in His hands (Cyrus: Isaiah 41:2, 25, 'Alexander as God' chosen appears in virtually every version of the Jerusalem narrative, regardless of the level of details). Just like in the case of Alexander, led by God's will and foretold in prophecy, Cyrus owes his own elevation and triumph to God's will and God's decision. Alexander is also often put in common context with Cyrus—albeit, in this case, not Cyrus alone—when Jewish writings discuss the question of universal kings,

25 Erich S. Gruen, "Persia through the Jewish Looking-Glass", in Rajak et al., pp. 53–75.

ruling over the entire world. Both the Macedonian conqueror and the founder of Achaemenid Empire are usually found on such lists, among other rulers of similar qualities.

Another king who is often assimilated with Alexander in Jewish tradition of the period is Solomon. An indirect comparison of the two appears in *Targum Sheni* I, 2, as Alexander obtains the marvellous throne of Solomon. It has previously been owned by a sequence of universal kings: Solomon, for whom the throne was made by Hiram of Tyre, was replaced by Ahasuerus the king of Persia, who was in turn followed by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, later by Alexander the Great and after him, by a curious sequence of quasi-historical rulers. The changing possession of Solomon's throne corresponds to the shifting powers and the change in the role of dominant world empire.

An interesting thing to note is that some of the kings were punished for usurping the throne—Shishak and Nebuchadnezzar were beaten by the throne's artificial lions and left lame as a result of this punishment, while when Epiphanes had the throne broken the damage could not be repaired. It is interesting to note that among the kings who are not punished we find, in addition to Solomon (the great Jewish monarch) and Cyrus (mentioned in the text as the builder of the Temple) Alexander. His merits and his beneficial action on behalf of the Jews are not mentioned, but the fact that he is allowed to sit on the throne rather suggests positive appraisal of his deeds.

Direct similarities between Alexander and Solomon in Jewish legends and in *Romance* were noted by Rosalie Reich in her introduction to *Sefer Aleksandros*.²⁶ The parallels that she notes are numerous and not all of them seem convincing; the filicide case, comparing Solomon's mother wish to kill her son for the offensive remarks he made on women with the plan of Alexander's mother who wants to kill him to give the throne to her son born legally of Philip, seems especially implausible.²⁷ Some of the parallels however, are undoubted and rather fascinating. Among these of special interest is the fact that both Solomon and Alexander are associated with the journey towards the mountain of darkness or the short mention of Alexander handing to the citizen of Jerusalem the amounts of gold not seen in the city since the times of Solomon son of David (the last example is present in the text but missed by Reich in her summary of Alexander-Solomon parallels). Reich concludes her comments by stating that the attributes of Solomon, known from Talmud and Midrash, were transferred and used in creating the portrayal of Alexander. One wonders, however, if in

26 Reich, *Tales of Alexander*, 9–13.

27 See Reich, *Tales of Alexander*, 10.

some of the cases the reverse was not true and if the legends of Alexander could have been a significant influence in forming some elements of the later Solomonic legends.

The idea of the universal rule of Alexander also appears in the Jewish sources very early on: it can be traced back to 1Macc., chronologically one of the earliest Jewish sources on Alexander, and is later continued throughout Jewish Alexander literature. In 1Macc. 1–10 Alexander's characteristic as a universal ruler and king of all the world also appears. It is combined with certain features of an evil tyrant, the king who is also an oppressor and an enemy of the Jews. Alexander the king inherits royal power from his father, (1. 1), vests it on others (1. 6); he uses it to successfully conquer many nations, in short—the entire world (1. 1–3). All this achievements make his proud beyond measure and—what is suggested, but not stated expressly—brought about his downfall.

Alexander in 1Macc. performs a number of actions and exhibits certain qualities which may be expected from a king, such as being part of a dynasty, conquering and finally dividing his land between his successors. At the same time, however, there are traces in this representation of another important, if not so popular, Jewish tradition concerning Alexander. The tradition in question is representing Alexander as evil tyrant, prone to anger and cruelty and often proud beyond measure.

Alexander's universal qualities as ruler are not unique for the Jewish readings of his person; on the contrary, they appear in numerous traditions as crucial features of various representations of Alexander and are of special importance, for example, for some Christian variants of the *Romance* as well as for Medieval and Renaissance concepts of placing Alexander among the greatest men of all time. Still, a number of motifs connecting Alexander with universal kingship present in Jewish tradition is actually quite impressive and suggests a special importance for such motif. The concept of universal ruler as applied to Alexander in Jewish tradition develops at the meeting point of two cultures, incorporating both the Greek and the Jewish strands of tradition. The later Jewish traditions seem, in fact, already inspired and influenced by the Greek-Jewish cultural contacts.

Main associations with the concept of universal rule in the Jewish culture from late Second Temple period onwards seem tripartite. Firstly, there are geographical indications: a universal king is expected to rule over the entire earth and be ready, in his hubris, to go even beyond those boundaries. Secondly, the apocalyptic and eschatological dimension is frequently present in this concept: the universal king rules in a time of change or, especially, is associated, directly or indirectly, with the Last Days. Thirdly and very importantly, the universal king is linked, in many and varied ways, with God. He may act as God's

representative or as a champion of those chosen by God; conversely, however, he can also be someone who set himself or is set to become the God's rival as a claimant to universal power, obviously to no avail. These qualities, in various combinations, are applied to the character of Alexander to stress the universal qualities of his reign. A seemingly contradictory element here is the fact that these *universal* narratives are often constructed in such a way that they stress and underline the specifically Jewish features of the king's representation. The fact that the universal king Alexander pays special attention to his Jewish subjects and honours them above others in his kingdom and, first and foremost, that it is the word of the Jewish God which marks Alexander as the ultimate conqueror cannot be disregarded here. At the same time, certain motifs in this representation of Alexander are indisputably more general, less particularly Jewish—the presence of the motifs known already from the eldest Greek tradition on Alexander, like the theme of *pothos* and of Alexander's *hubris*, can clearly be detected here.

The whole sequence of Tamid stories concerning Alexander points, in fact, at various failures of Alexander. He, in general, loses the debate with the Elders of Negev; he is slightly ridiculed in the episode with the Land of Darkness; he fails a quest for immortality, he is barred from entering the Paradise (with additional implications calling into question his very qualifications to rule) and he loses a debate with women. Moreover, his *pothos* is clearly shown in these scenes as something dangerous and distractive.

Alexander's character is used here in a rather ahistorical, fantastic context—which seems an important feature of Talmudic narratives on the Macedonian king and on Greek/Roman historical characters in general. The moralistic character of the tale is, however, juxtaposed with the political one: with a debate on royalty, royal power and its limits, when compared to the might of God. As in the case of other universal rulers, Alexander is shown here in ambiguous way: his power over the lands is indisputable, but once his ambitions compel him to compare himself to God, he is obviously doomed to fail. In connection with the story of the Land of Darkness and its possible comic undertones it seems probable that they use the image of the king as an example of a ruler *par excellence*: on one hand, mighty, powerful and ruling, according to God's will, over vast expanse of lands, on the other, never satisfied with what he has and prone to hubristic and egotistic thinking. Alexander's greatness is indeed stressed in these stories—but one must not forget that, at the same time, they are also put in perspective, as compared with the wisdom of the Jews and the greatness of their God.

The kingship of Alexander is stressed in Jewish literature also by showing the king performing actions typical for royal persons. One of them is the

founding of cities. In Alexander's case, city most often mentioned is obviously the Egyptian Alexandria, home, apart from anything else, to a large, flourishing and, especially in Roman times, often politically troubled Jewish Diaspora.

Jewish tradition preserves a number of stories concerning the founding of Alexandria and already Friedrich Pfister²⁸ noted their similarity to the narrative in pseudo-Callisthenes γ (1 31–33). Some Jewish variants of the *Romance* preserve this story with certain variations. The narrative on Alexandria in MSS London (12) and Paris (247a–b) is quite parallel. In both cases Alexander orders the building of the city. Birds, like in pseudo-Callisthenes, appear, this time without the incentive in form of food (flour). The first wave of birds gets eaten by a stork (MS London) or the second arriving group (MS Paris). Like in pseudo-Callisthenes, the following scene deals with two interpretations of an omen. The first person interpreting the bird omen is Alexander himself: he is grieving, because he understands it as a prophecy that the city will be destroyed. However, his understanding of the omen is false and he is told that by his Egyptian subjects—the sages and priests of Egypt. They in turn interpret the sign as a promise that many other cities would feed off the newly founded Alexandria. The story of the founding of Alexandria is absent from the current form of Bonfils' *Sefer Toledot*, but the reason for it is the lacuna in the text;²⁹ neither does it appear in the more fanciful type 3 *Romance* narratives. There is an additional, typically Jewish aspect of the stories describing the founding of Alexandria. MS Paris supplements the narrative with a curious detail, known also from Rabbinic literature (*Midrash Haggadah Numbers*, 30: 15). The story concerns the bones of the prophet Jeremiah, which Alexander had recovered and reburied in Alexandria, in order to protect the city from snakes, vipers and beasts of prey.

Jewish texts on Alexander contain also a number of stories concerning Alexander's other activities, namely his meetings with various other royal figures, both historical and mythological. Many of them, like the story of Alexander's wars with Darius and Porus, are based on historical accounts. Others, like the story of the Amazon queen, come from the common repository of legends concerning the Macedonian conqueror. Some, however, are specific to the Jewish culture.

28 F. Pfister, "Eine jüdische Gründungsgeschichte Alexandrias: Mit einem Anhang über Alexanders Besuch in Jerusalem", *Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften* 5, 1914, Abh. 11, 20–22.

29 Kazis, *Sefer Toledot*, 195 n. 15.

Such a story is an episode of Alexander's meeting with king Kazia.³⁰ The ruler of the kingdom beyond the land of darkness, king Kazia plays host to Alexander; despite the fabulous treasures of Kazia's kingdom, Alexander declares that he himself is interested only in observing how justice is dispensed in Kazia's kingdom. The court case that Kazia is about to judge in front of Alexander belongs to the classical repertoire of folk stories and has close parallels in Greek tradition. The case in point is a ruling to whom should the treasure, found in a recently sold field, belong. Interestingly, apparently none of the men wants the treasure: the buyer claims that he bought only the field, without any additional benefits, while the seller says that he had sold the land with whatever it contained. King Kazia asks them if one of them has a son and the other a daughter and being affirmed that this indeed is the case he gives a ruling; a son of one of the men and the daughter of the other should marry and be given the treasure. Alexander, who observes the proceedings, is supposedly interested only in watching the procedure, but soon he shows his other, less philosophical side. He openly admits to king Kazia that in his country the ruling would be completely different: both litigants would be killed and the treasure delivered into the hands of the judge-king. Such a statement earns Alexander a sharp rebuke from Kazia.

The events following the scene differ slightly in three known versions of the episode, but all three of them have a theme in common. King Kazia accuses Alexander of loving gold too much and sets for him a dinner where only golden copies of food articles are served. When Alexander predictably, cannot eat them, the king asks him a series of seemingly absurd questions that have been designed to prove that Alexander's conquest is motivated by pure greed, his pursuit of knowledge and justice just a façade. Such a reading, showing Alexander as a rather ambiguous figure, seems prevalent in the *Baba Mezia* version. The story looks slightly different in the second group of sources, thanks to the change in narrative order. Here Alexander is greeted in Kazia's country by the meal made of gold and asked by the citizens what is it that he comes here for, if not gold. Only then he reveals that he comes in pursuit of not gold, but knowledge—this time, it is him who has outwitted his disputants.

The concept of Alexander represented in dispute with other wise figures is the third of the dominant motifs in Jewish Alexander literature. It is present in some interesting passages which Josephus preserved from the work of pseudo-

30 See *Baba Mezia* 11, 5, 8c; also, for a slightly different version, see *Genesis Rabbah* 33, 1, *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* 9, 24, *Leviticus Rabbah* 27, 1 and *Midrash Tanhuma*, *Emor*, 6. Another is to be found in *Yalkut Shimoni* Ps. 36, 727.

Hecataeus. Of those, the passage concerning the works in the temple of Bel is probably the most significant. The story concentrates on the Jewish soldier's refusal of work during the renovations of the temple of Bel in Babylon. The information of Alexander's interest in the temple of Bel and generally, in rebuilding the temples destroyed by the Persians is also supported by Arrian.³¹ The passage that Josephus quotes from pseudo-Hecataeus coincides with the fourth of the rights mentioned in *Antiquitates*: Alexander there allows the Jews to join his army and simultaneously to keep their ancestral way of life. The fragment in pseudo-Hecataeus elaborates, in fact, the same theme. We have the Jewish soldiers in Babylon, who are given a simple enough order: they are to help cleaning and carrying away the rubble of the destroyed Bel temple, in order to make it possible to rebuild it. They refuse the order, are punished for it (both corporal and financial punishments are mentioned), but finally their perseverance and their obedience to the law higher than a military authority pays off, as Alexander agreed to free them from partaking in the rebuilding.

Throughout the history of literary compositions read and discussed here, the images of Alexander that would emerge were those of the Macedonian king as a character fitted into Jewish history and culture. The features of the king, his behaviour and his actions are seen within the framework of Jewish culture, customs, traditions and, last but not least, contemporary problems of Jewish societies discussing him. At the same time, Jewish literature on Alexander is fascinating and unique, but at the same time it shares a number of qualities with other Alexander traditions. And just like in other cultures appropriating and assimilating Alexander, also in the Jewish milieu there is one tendency that seems of special importance. Alexander, namely, is presented there within the framework of Jewish traditions, in a way that accepts and accentuates the Jewish worldview. By using biblical quotations in the *Romance*, by stressing, over and over, the omnipresence and omnipotence of God, by showing Alexander accepting Jewish Scriptures, traditions and customs and by presenting him as compliant to the Jewish way of life, the authors, redactors and composers of the Jewish Alexander texts accept him, to a great extent, as his own and, by showing his importance and his glory, exalt the greatness of the Jewish culture, society and religion.

31 Arrian, *Anabasis* III, 16, 4.

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Jews, Samaritans and Alexander: Facts and Fictions in Jewish Stories on the Meeting of Alexander and the High Priest

Meir Ben Shahar

Alexander the Great was, by all measures, a boundary-breaching personality. His breaching of political, cultural and religious boundaries left an imprint on the course of history but also on the historical imagination of those who wove him into their stories. In this article, I will deal with only one episode that, although historically tenuous, certainly resonated in the minds of succeeding generations.¹ Diverse Jewish sources relate the encounter between Alexander and the high priest. Josephus describes an impressive meeting at Tzofim (Σαφείν), Mt. Scopus, near Jerusalem, with Jaddus the high priest, while rabbinic sources recount that Simon the Just, the high priest, met Alexander on the coastal road, not far from modern-day Tel Aviv. The paper will address the relationships between the divergent traditions concerning the story of Alexander and the high priest and the differing circumstances of their derivation. The first part of the paper will be an exposition of Josephus' story and the rabbinic account. Next, I will examine the traditions' textual evolution. The article's final focus will be on the *sitz im leben* of the tradition of the encounter and the stories that it engendered.

Alexander and the High Priest: Josephus' Account

The encounter between Alexander and the high priest first appears in Book 11 of Flavius Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*.² Alexander materializes in Josephus

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- 1 The question of the story of the encounter's historicity has perplexed scholars from the beginning of the modern period up to the present day. For a review of research on the topic see: Amram D. Tropper, *A Legend Reinvented: Simeon the Righteous in Rabbinic Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 126–129.
 - 2 This is obviously not the first reference to Alexander in Jewish literature. 1Maccabees opens with a description of Alexander's conquests and of his death (1Macc 1:1–7). It is also highly

at the intersection of the biblical and the post-biblical worlds. The 11th book opens with Cyrus and the return to Zion and surveys the events of the Persian period according to the books of Ezra-Nehemiah, Daniel and Esther. The book's final section recounts the Esther story (*Ant.* 11, 186–296), followed by a brief extra-biblical episode regarding a confrontation between the high priest and his brother that led to the slaying of Jesus by his brother Johanan, the high priest. This murder prompted the entry to the Temple of Bagoses, the Persian appointee, amidst the Jews' tremendous consternation (*Ant.* 11, 297–301).³

The next chapter, that introduces the story of the encounter, also narrates the story of two brothers locked in rivalry over the high priesthood. The high priest—Jaddus—had a brother named Manasseh who had wed Nicaso, the daughter of Sanballat the Satrap of Samaria (*ibid.*, 302–303). Manasseh was determined to divorce Nicaso over the people's dissatisfaction with his intermarriage—a potential impediment to his bid for the high priesthood. Sanballat proposed that he move to Samaria and build a Temple on Mt. Gerizim and serve there as high priest. Manasseh accepted his offer, bringing with him a sizeable contingent from Jerusalem (*ibid.*, 306–312). Here begins a new strand, dealing with Alexander and his relationship with Sanballat and Jaddus. Josephus depicts Alexander's military successes and his conquests up to the siege of Tyre (*ibid.*, 313–317). Alexander demands support from the high priest who demurred on the grounds of his pre-existing, sworn allegiance to Darius (*ibid.*, 317–319). Sanballat, in contrast, viewed Alexander's approach as an opportunity to boost his satrapy's prestige. Escorted by a force of 8,000 men, he arrived to support Alexander and succeeded in obtaining his permission to build a temple on Mt. Gerizim over which Manasseh would preside (*ibid.*, 321–324). From this point on, the narrative centres on the encounter between Alexander and the high priest (*ibid.*, 326–339). Alexander indeed heads up to Jerusalem to settle his score with the high priest, yet when he comes into view, something incredible happens: Alexander “kneeled and bowed before God” (*ibid.*, 331), explaining that “I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dios in Macedonia”. Alexander relates that this man's image encouraged him to embark on his campaign against the Persians; moreover, he had even told Alexander that he “would conduct my army” (*ibid.*). Thereafter Alexander

likely that knowledge of Alexander and his persona forms the underpinning of Daniel 8:5, see John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 331.

3 On this episode and reverberations of its biblical sources see James C. VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas: High Priests after the Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 58–63.

went up to the Temple and, heeding the high priest's instructions, sacrificed to God. The priests showed him the book of Daniel and he read from it, supposing himself the king who Daniel predicted would destroy the Persian Empire (ibid, 337). Finally, Alexander granted privileges to the residents of Judea, including the right to live by the laws of their ancestors, an exemption from paying tribute during the sabbatical year, and even a promise to treat the Jews of Babylon and Media similarly. Following this, many Jews responded to his call to accompany him in his military campaigns (ibid, 339).

Here the strand dealing with the Samaritans is reprised (ibid, 340–345). Like the Jews, the Samaritans also went out to greet Alexander and show him honour. They invited him to come and inspect their temple and requested the same privileges as the Jews (ibid, 342–343) but Alexander began to probe their identity and asked if they were Jews. When they denied being Jewish, Alexander deferred discussion of their petition to a later date (ibid, 344).

Scholars have distinguished four discrete narrative strands in this Josephus' story:

1. Sanballat's attempt to marry into the high priestly family (302–303; 306–312).
2. The encounter between Alexander and the high priest (317b–319; 325b–339).
3. Alexander's rejection of the Samaritans' petition (340–345).
4. Various references to Alexander's campaign (304–305; 313–314; 316–317a; 320).

Notwithstanding minor disagreement over the precise delineation of the strands, this division is, overall, an accepted one.⁴ Compounded by the disjointedness of the various sections and the contradictions between them, this division has prompted scholars to view Josephus' story as a tapestry of disparate sources. Consensus reigns on the references to Alexander's campaign: they are

4 The first division proposal was suggested by Adolf Büchler, "La relation de Josèphe concernant Alexandre le grand", *Revue des Études Juives* 36 (1898): 1–26. Since then there have been many proposals, see Tropper's concise review, *Simeon the Righteous*, 121–125. For a detailed discussion of the various proposals see Meir Ben Shahr, "Alexander the Great and the High Priest", in *Josephus and the Rabbis*, ed. Tal Ilan and Vered Noam in collaboration with Meir Ben Shahr, Daphne Baratz and Yael Fisch, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2017): 100–104 (Hebrew).

attributed to other historians who documented the campaign.⁵ The other sections' provenance is more difficult to determine. Scholars attributed the story of Alexander's encounter with the high priest—from which the Samaritans are absent—to Jewish sources. Early scholars assumed a Samaritan source for the story of Sanballat, on the premise that the story of his meeting with Alexander was intended to legitimate the Samaritan temple.⁶ However, as many have noted, it is very difficult to perceive in Josephus' exposition of the story of Sanballat, a reflection of a Samaritan or pro-Samaritan source: the construction of the temple is depicted as a dubious gift to a power hungry priest and Sanballat himself is portrayed as an opportunist who violates his oath to Darius. The second segment of the account of Alexander and the Samaritans is certainly not pro-Samaritan as it elaborates their failure to procure recognition of their status and of their temple.⁷ The discrepancy between the two sections with regard to Alexander's role is glaring. The story of Manasseh's marriage to Sanballat's daughter, as well as the promise to erect a temple is entirely unrelated to Alexander's exploits. It is Josephus, by inserting two sentences depicting Alexander's exploits at the height of the drama in Jerusalem, who determines that the story occurred during Alexander's time.⁸ The second Samaritan episode is wholly unconnected to the first. It makes no mention of Sanballat, whose sudden death (!) was noted earlier (*ibid*, 325) as a *non sequitur*, apparently for the sole purpose of elucidating his disappearance. More crucially, it seems that the Samaritans, who attempt to extract from Alexander the same privileges that he had granted the Jews, are not aware that their leader is a Jewish high priest (Manasseh) or that many ex-Jerusalemite Jews had joined their ranks (*ibid*, 312). They call themselves "Sidonites living at Shechem" and use the enigmatic term "Hebrews". On the other hand, this episode is inextricably tied to the story of the encounter between Alexander and the high priest. The Samaritans attempt to emulate the Jews: they ask Alexander to come to their temple and to grant them similar privileges but they are turned down.

5 It is not possible to pinpoint which version and which historian of the many versions and historians who wrote about Alexander were known to Josephus.

6 Büchler, "Alexandre le grand", 4–6.

7 Daniel R. Schwartz, "On Some Papyri and Josephus' Sources and Chronology for the Persian Period", *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 21 (1990): 190, n. 39.

8 These sentences (Josephus, *Ant.* 304–305) begin with the phrase "About this time". This is Josephus' stock phrase that he uses when inserting material from other sources. See Daniel R. Schwartz, "KATA TOYTON TON KAIPON: Josephus' source on Agrippa II", *Jewish Quarterly Review* 72 (1982): 241–268, esp. 248.

That the second and the third episode derive from disparate sources is readily apparent.⁹ The second episode's strong affinity to the foregoing section relating Alexander's visit to Jerusalem belies its historicity. On the contrary, had Josephus possessed any actual historical memory he would have recorded the Samaritan revolt, forcibly suppressed by Alexander.¹⁰ Josephus, who detested the Samaritans,¹¹ would not have sufficed with such a pallid ending; rather, he would have preferred to depict their crushing defeat—a consequence of the disloyalty of which, he alleges, they were guilty. The absence of any memory or tradition relating to the encounter between Alexander and the Samaritans is what led him to cast the third episode as a mirror image of the meeting between Alexander and the Jews.

The status of the first episode depicting Sanballat's relationship with Jerusalem's elites is different. From the start, scholarly research has acknowledged the biblical grounding of this story. One of the most profound difficulties faced by the returnees from Babylon was the question of intermarriage, outside of the community. This problem is even elaborated in the conclusion of the book of Ezra-Nehemiah: "One of the sons of Joiada son of the high priest Eliashib was a son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite; I drove him away from me" (Neh 13:28).

Alongside the obvious similarities, others highlighted the discrepancies. Nehemiah speaks of a son or descendant of Jehoiadah (maybe Jaddus) while Josephus speaks of the brother of Jaddus. Josephus knows the name of Sanballat's daughter, Nicaso, while in Nehemiah she is non-existent. For hundreds of years, scholars pondered whether this was a one-time event or if such a marriage recurred. The archaeological findings that evinced the existence of a Satrap named Sanballat in 4th century Samaria, seemingly supported the assumption of two similar events—one in the time of Nehemiah, at the end of the 5th century, and the other about three generations later, during the time of Alexander, which is the event recorded by Josephus. However, as previ-

9 This conclusion is shared by many scholars. See already Büchler, "Alexandre le grand", 25 and also Tropper, *Simeon the Righteous*, 123–125.

10 Description of the revolt can be found in Curtius Rufus, *Hist.* IV 8.9–11. For modern discussions of the revolt see Menachem Mor, "Samaritan History: The Persian, Hellenistic and Hasmonean Period", in *The Samaritans*, ed. Alan D. Crown (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 9–11; Aryeh Kasher, "Further Revised Thoughts on Josephus' Report of Alexander's Campaign to Palestine (AJ XI 304–347)", in *Judah Between East and West: The Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400–200 BCE)*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Oded Lipschits (London: T&T Clark, 2011): 153–157.

11 See e.g. Reinhard Pummer, *The Samaritans in Flavius Josephus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 76, 281–284, on his hostility to the Samaritans.

ously mentioned, the episode's assignment to the time of Alexander is Josephus's handiwork.¹² The depiction of the confrontation between Manasseh and Sanballat and the people of Jerusalem contains no details that mandate its postponement to the time of Alexander. Evidently, Josephus indeed relied on Nehemiah 13 or a related source.¹³ The fact that the Bible concludes with this event enabled him to connect it with the end of the Persian and the beginning of the Hellenistic periods. To sum up: apparently, Josephus's story was woven from three disparate sources. Nehemiah 13:28 or a related text underpins the first Samaritan episode. Seemingly, Josephus appropriated the encounter between Alexander and the high priest from a Jewish source that also handed him the building blocks for the incident of Alexander's meeting with the Samaritans. Additionally, Greek and Roman historians furnished Josephus with various details about Alexander's campaign.

The Rabbis on Alexander and the Samaritans

As mentioned, scholars identified a Jewish source concerning the encounter between Alexander and the high priest among the likely sources that contributed to Josephus' story. What type of source is it? Although rabbinic literature has conserved a depiction of the meeting of the two personalities, as we shall see, it is implausible that this was Josephus' source. Megillat Taanit (the Scroll of Fasting) contains the most detailed depiction of the encounter. The scroll is a litany of 35 auspicious dates marking salvations that befell the Jews, on which fasting and mourning were prohibited. Nearly all the events listed date to the Second Temple period—from the early Persian to the Roman period. The scroll's style is concise and laconic. Each date is accompanied by several words that describe its concomitant event. The scroll's terse language was presumably formulated for an audience that was well acquainted with the dates and their stories. Apparently, the scroll was authored at the end of the Second Temple period: over the course of time, the terse depiction proved inadequate and thus, in the 3rd–4th centuries it was amplified by a commentary referred to by scholars as the *Scholion* commentary. The nature of this commentary, however, is complex. At times, it quotes original traditions associated

12 For a review of research on its transmutations, see Schwartz, "Some Papyri", 185–186.

13 This is also the conclusion of Schwartz, "Some Papyri", 198–199. However Josephus does provide more details such as the names of the priest and the daughter of Sanballat. It is possible that Josephus did not use Nehemiah as his source but rather a related text (*ibid.*, 197–198).

with the date; other times, however, it appears that the author himself is wondering about the date's significance and is consequently contriving to elucidate an obscure event whose resonance has long-faded.¹⁴ The 21st of Kislev is documented by the *Scholion* as "the day of Mt. Gerizim", about which it says:¹⁵

The day upon which the Kutim requested and were granted the temple from Alexander the Macedonian, Israel came and informed Simon the Just who donned his sacerdotal vestments and went out to him accompanied by all the leaders of Jerusalem and when they were walking, they saw flashes of light. The king asked "What is that?" and his informers responded: "It is the Jews who rebelled against you". When they reached Antipatris the sun shone. He saw Simon the Just clad in his sacerdotal vestments, fell from his chariot, and prostrated himself on the ground before him. They asked him: "Why are you prostrating yourself?" "Is he not a man?" He responded: "The image of one like this is what I see when I go down to war and am victorious". He (= Alexander) said to him: "What is your request?" He (= Simon the Just) responded: "You were misled by gentiles with regard to the house in which we pray for your kingdom and you gave it to them". He said to him: "Who misled me?" He responded: "the Kutim". He said to him: "Do with them as you will". They (= the Jews) pierced their heels and let them hang from the horses and dragged them over thorns and thistles until Mt. Gerizim. As they arrived there, at Mt. Gerizim, they plowed it over and sowed it with seed, as they had proposed to do to the Temple. The day that this transpired became a holiday.

Scholars unanimously regard John Hyrcanus I's military campaign against the Samaritans as the basis for the event recorded in Megillat Taanit. During this campaign, in 111/12 CE, the Samaritan temple was destroyed (*Ant.* 13, 256–257).¹⁶

14 For the text and elucidation of Megillat Taanit see Vered Noam, *Megillat Taanit: Versions, Interpretation, History* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2003). For an updated discussion of the scroll's redaction and its contents see Noam, "Megillat Taanit".

15 The *Scholion* has been handed down in two versions called *Scholion A* (ms. Oxford) and *Scholion P* (ms. Parma). Many discrepancies inhere between the two versions. I have, hereunder, cited *Scholion P* which appears, in this case, to have preserved a number of superior variants; however, *Scholion A* also contains a number of important modifications, which will be discussed hereunder. On the two versions of the *Scholion* see Noam, "Megillat Taanit", 350–356.

16 Josephus, *Wars* 1:62, writes that John Hyrcanus conquered Mt. Gerizim during Antiochus' Sidetes' campaign against Media, i.e. in 129 BCE. However, this information has recently

The campaign itself ended about two years later with the conquest of the city of Samaria following a several months long siege (ibid. 280–283). Both Josephus and rabbinic literature record the military campaign's mythical conclusion: John is informed of the conclusion of the war against the Samaritans through a theophany that takes place at the Temple.¹⁷ This story unquestionably bespeaks the importance attributed to this war. Apparently, we even have evidence of a special *encomium* and thanksgiving prayer, called Joseph's prayer, that was composed in the wake of this successful military campaign.¹⁸ The connection between this event and Alexander was forged centuries later, by the author of the *Scholion*.

Scrutiny of the *Scholion's* discrepant versions in rabbinic literature reveals here too a blend of several sources. The story begins with the Samaritan's demand for control of the Temple—or Mt. Moriah, according to other versions. The violent struggle between the Jews and their neighbours recalls, to some extent, the demand of the “adversaries of Judah and Benjamin” (Ezr. 4:1–5), also called “the people of the land” (ibid. 4:4), at the beginning of the Second Temple period, to collaborate with the returnees from Babylon in building the Temple.¹⁹ However, the story concludes with the destruction of Mt. Gerizim, assuming, apparently, that this, and not Jerusalem, was their holy place! It would appear, therefore, that the two episodes derived from discrepant sources and that their conflation was flawed.

been disproven. John Hyrcanus embarked on his conquest of Samaria only in 112/111 BCE and the city was conquered only in 108/109 (Pummer, *The Samaritans in Flavius Josephus*, 201–205; Gerald Finkielsztein, “More evidence on John Hyrcanus 1's Conquests: Lead Weights and Rhodian Amphora Stamps”, *Bulletin of the Anglo Israel Archaeological Society* 16 [1998]: 33–63).

- 17 On this event see Vered Noam, “Why did the Heavenly Voice Speak Aramaic? Ancient Layers in Rabbinic literature”, in *From Text to Context in Ancient Judaism: Studies in Honor of Steven Fraade*, eds. Michal Bar-Asher Siegal, Christine Hayes and Tzvi Novick (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; forthcoming).
- 18 On Joseph's prayer see Hanan Eshel, “The Prayer of Joseph from Qumran, a Papyrus from Masada and the Samaritan Temple on AFGAPIZIN”, *Zion* 56 (1991): 125–136 (Hebrew); Eileen Schuller and Moshe Bernstein, “Narrative and Poetic Composition”, in *Wadi Daliyeh 11: The Samaria Papyri from Wadi Daliyeh and Qumran Cave 4.XXVIII: Miscellanea, Part 2*, eds. Douglas M. Gropp et al. (DJD 28. Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 153–197.
- 19 It bears mentioning that this population was already identified by Josephus as Samaritan (*Ant.* 11:84–85). Some scholars also support this identification, see Pummer, *The Samaritans in Flavius Josephus*, 83–84, 87–88. However, some scholars identify the “people of the land” with another local population. This topic has been discussed extensively. See, recently, John Tracy Thames, “A new discussion of the meaning of the Phrase *‘am hā’āreṣ* in the Hebrew Bible”, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 130 (2011): 109–125.

The connection between the beginning of the story and Alexander's arrival seems similarly stretched. Another version of the *Scholion* states: "When the Kutim came and said to Alexander 'give us five measures of land in Mt. Moriah' and he sold it to them. When they arrived, the people of Jerusalem came out and pursued them with sticks. When they came to Antipatris before Alexander, Simon the Just heard about it." In this version, the stitching that unites the conflict with the Samaritans and the encounter with Alexander is very crude. It is unclear who came before Alexander and why, especially after he was already depicted fulfilling the Samaritan's request. Furthermore, where was Simon the Just when the Samaritans arrived and how is he tied to those who "came to Antipatris" before Alexander? Presumably, here too, we have before us divergent traditions. One depicts a confrontation between the Jews and the Samaritans over their connection with the Temple while the other reports an encounter between Alexander and the high priest.

The last section, that depicts the desolation of Mt. Gerizim apparently relates to the destruction perpetrated by John Hyrcanus. His campaign against the Samaritans culminated with the conquest of the city of Samaria at the conclusion of a prolonged siege. Josephus describes John Hyrcanus' devastation of the city:

And so Hyrcanus captured the city after besieging it for a year, but not being content with that alone, he effaced it entirely and left it to be swept away by the mountain-torrents, for he dug beneath it until it fell into the beds of the torrents, and so removed all signs of its ever having been a city

JOSEPHUS, *Ant.* 13:281

Josephus' depiction is as effusive as the *Scholion's* is spare, yet the memory that they both reflect is seemingly identical. The *Scholion* concludes in the following fashion: "As they arrived at Mt. Gerizim, they plowed it over and sowed it with seed." Both the *Scholion* and Josephus depict a settlement that was utterly destroyed and rendered no longer fit for human habitation but only for agricultural activity. Although Josephus relates the razing of the city of Samaria and the *Scholion* recounts that of Mt. Gerizim, this disparity is easily bridged. The "day of Mt. Gerizim" probably did not represent one incident or another but rather the conclusion of the military campaign against the Samaritans. The two climactic events of the campaign were undoubtedly the conquest of the temple and of the main city. The conglomeration of all the events into one date probably led to the transposition of traditions from one incident to another and thus the memory of the destruction of the city became, in the *Scholion*, the desolation of the mountaintop.

Review of Research

Despite the numerous and fundamental discrepancies between the stories, their overall similarity has attracted scholarly interest. Research gave rise to two divergent, albeit connected inquiries. The first sought to elucidate the relationship between the rabbinic version and Josephus: which version predated the other, who borrowed from whom, and whether both versions derived from a common, earlier source? The second question pertained to the historical situations that elicited each of the stories. Most scholars have inclined towards the theory that both Josephus and rabbinic literature drew from an ancient legend that each then amplified as they saw fit—an approach that would dictate exposition of the original source and clarification of its radically diversified development.²⁰ Indeed, scholars posited a range of events, beginning from the Ptolemaic period (300 BCE) up to the eve of the second destruction (1st century CE). Conspicuous among these suggestions was one that proposed a link between the emergence of the Alexander story and the conflict with the Samaritans. Jonathan Goldstein contended that the roots of Josephus' story lay in the late 4th century BCE, when the Land of Israel came under Ptolemaic rule and an anchor was sought for Jewish privileges, especially in view of competing groups like the Samaritans. The rabbinic story, in contrast, is not even aware of a Samaritan temple—thus establishing its destruction in 110 BCE as the story's terminus *post quem*. The grim depictions of Jewish-Samaritan friction animated Goldstein's theory that the rabbis composed the story in response to violent clashes between Samaritans and Jews in the days of Comenius (48–52).²¹

Shaye Cohen suggests the opposite: the story that we have before us was framed first by Josephus, using sources that have not been handed down to us and therefore cannot be discerned and reconstructed. As such, there is no point

20 Theoretically, it was incumbent on scholars who asserted Josephus' reliance on several sources, to investigate the date of each of the story segments and when and by whom they were consolidated. However, only few scholars undertook all aspects of this task. See, in particular, Ferdinand Dexinger, "Der Ursprung der Samaritaner im Spiegel der frühen Quellen", in *Die Samaritaner*, ed. Ferdinand Dexinger and Reinhard Pummer (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992): 102–140 and Hans G. Kippenberg, *Garizim und Synagoge: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur samaritanischen Religion der aramäischen Periode* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971), 50–57.

21 Jonathan A. Goldstein, "Alexander and the Jews", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 59 (1993): 59–101.

seeking insights into the circumstances surrounding the story's inception.²² The rabbis borrowed Josephus' story and adapted it for their own use. Recently, Amram Tropper has aligned himself with this view, adding that the rabbis, needing to explicate the "day of Mt. Gerizim", borrowed and reformulated Josephus' account.²³

Cohen and Tropper's approach is difficult to defend. While the conspicuous inconsistencies concerning the name of the high priest and the site of the encounter may be reconcilable,²⁴ the most salient divergence is the framing of the story itself. Josephus relates how the Samaritan temple came to be constructed while the rabbis elaborate the mountain's devastation. Josephus is preoccupied with the issue of intermarriage while the rabbis ignore the topic. Still, the depictions of the encounter between Alexander and the high priest are strikingly similar—a fact that invites further inquiry. In the following, I will propose a different view of the sources' interrelationship and, consequently, a different take on the date of composition of the story's disparate segments. The ensuing paragraph will examine the textual relationship between Josephus' account and that of the rabbis. Then, based on these conclusions, I will hypothesize the *sitz im leben* of the formation of the story's constituent segments and the phases of its development.

22 His logical admonition notwithstanding, Shaye. J.D. Cohen, "Alexander the Great and Jaddus the High Priest according to Josephus", *AJS Review* 7–9 (1982–1983): 65, does indeed attempt to trace the story of the encounter between Alexander and the high priest (absent the Samaritan segments). He proposes that the first segment was composed in the Ptolemaic period and the second—depicting the threat to Jerusalem—was of later, Hasmonean provenance.

23 Tropper, *Simeon the Righteous*, 148.

24 It is quite reasonable to assume that the rabbis sought to attribute all the significant acts of the pre-Hasmonean era to the semi-legendary persona of Simon the Just (Tropper, *Simeon the Righteous*, 213–216). Regarding the meeting place, Ralph Marcus (trans.), *Josephus*, vol. IV: *Jewish Antiquities* 9–11 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937), 472–473, n. b, reconciles Tzofim with Antipatris by asserting Josephus' misunderstood of the source at hand. He maintains that the ancient source had cited "Sava" which later became "Antipatris" under Herod (Josephus, *Ant.* 16:142). Josephus read it as "Tzofim" and the *Scholion* substituted the later name for the earlier one.

The Textual Dimension of the Stories of Sanballat, Alexander and the High Priest

Despite discrepancies with regard to numerous details, the encounter story in Josephus and the rabbinic source is discernibly structurally analogous. The story begins and concludes with the status of the Samaritans. Occupying the middle is a relatively lengthy unit depicting the encounter between Alexander and the high priest. Interestingly, several surprising points of convergence exist among the numerous and significant discrepancies with regard to the ‘Samaritan’ segments.

Josephus	Scholion
(331) For when Alexander while still far off saw the multitude in white garments the priests at their head clothed in linen, and the high priest in a robe of hyacinth-blue and gold, wearing on his head the mitre with the golden plate on it on which was inscribed the name of God, he approached alone and prostrated himself before the Name and first greeted the high priest ...	He saw Simon the Just wearing his sacerdotal vestments.
(333) And Parmenion alone went up to him and asked why indeed, when all men prostrated themselves before him, he had prostrated himself before the high priest of the Jews?	He fell from his chariot and prostrated himself before him. They said to him: You are prostrating yourself before him? Is he not a human being?
whereupon he replied, “It was not before him that I prostrated myself but the God of whom he has the honour to be high priest (334) for it was he whom I saw in my sleep dressed as he is now, when I was at Dium in Macedonia, and, as I was considering with myself how I might become master of Asia, he urged me not to hesitate but to cross over confidently, for he himself would lead my army and give over to me the empire of the Persians.”	He responded: The image of one like this is what I see when I go down to war and I am victorious

Josephus’ depiction is far more elaborate and rhetorically embellished. Yet, even though his version evinces lacunae, the similarity between the two depictions is obvious. We will begin with the description of the Jerusalemites. Jose-

phus describes how Alexander saw the Jerusalemites clad in white and the priests dressed in their priestly garb. A few paragraphs earlier, Jaddus was commanded to festoon the city in Alexander's honour and open the gates to welcome him: "the people should be in white garments, and he himself with the priests in the robes prescribed by law" (Josephus, *Ant.* 11:327). The aforementioned *Scholion* recounted the priestly vestments of Simon the Just, but previously it depicted the preparations for Simon's meeting with Alexander: "When they came to Antipatris before Alexander, Simon the Just heard. He took with him a thousand of Jerusalem's notables, outfitted in white and a thousand neophyte priests bedecked with ceremonial vessels".²⁵ Both stories record that the Jerusalemites were clad in white—which connotes festivity—while the priests wore their holy garments. Then it relates how Alexander suddenly prostrated himself before the high priest. Josephus' explanation that Alexander was bowing to God, whose name appears on the priestly crown, and not to the high priest, was obviously essential for a Greco-Roman audience that might have interpreted Alexander's prostration divergently from the Jewish conception. The rabbinic tradition can certainly dispense with this clarification, though reverberations of this conception can be discerned in the questions directed at Alexander: "They said to him—you are bowing to him? Is he not a human being?" The question's format recalls Parmenion's question in Josephus' account: "why indeed, when all men prostrated themselves before him, he had prostrated himself before the high priest of the Jews" (Josephus, *Ant.* 11:333). Josephus' Parmenion intimates that humans are aware that Alexander is not an ordinary mortal and therefore they prostrate themselves before him. That being the case, why did Alexander prostrate himself before an ordinary mortal?

The climax is forthcoming in Alexander's response: "The image of one like this is what I see when I go down to war and I am victorious." Josephus' version reads: "for it was he whom I saw in my sleep looked as he is now, when I was at

25 This is the rendering of *Scholion A*. However, *Scholion P* has a slightly different rendering: "They came and notified Simon the Just. What did he do? He donned his sacerdotal vestments and wrapped himself in his sacerdotal vestments and the notables of Jerusalem with him". The Bavli's rendering is similar. The relationship between the two versions is complex, as I discussed elsewhere. It can be determined, generally speaking, that when one of the two versions departs from Josephus' story, the deviation attests the version's deterioration and the use of stock phrases. In this case, Josephus and *Scholion A* preserve a unique version that depicts the white garb of the Jerusalemites while *Scholion P* waives this depiction and makes do with the worn and commonplace phrase "the notables of Jerusalem".

Dium in Macedonia, and, as I was considering with myself how I might become master of Asia, he urged me not to hesitate but to cross over confidently, for he himself would lead my army and give over to me the empire of the Persians". The answers' components and their style are identical. Alexander stresses that he is already acquainted with the image of the priest standing before him. The Hebrew phrase "The image of one like this" (בדמותו של זה) is identical to the Greek phrase ἐν τῷ νῦν σχήματι—"looked as he is now". The Hebrew word "this" equates to pointing a finger at something that has just been revealed.²⁶ Both Josephus and the rabbinic source remark on the image of the high priest and his appearance, at the head of the Greek forces. Evidently, some parts of the encounter's depictions are identical, not only with regard to content, but also insofar as they retain identical constructions. The linguistic affinity between the two depictions, however, stands to bolster the assertion that the rabbis copied and in fact 'translated' Josephus' Greek into their own language.

The same cannot be said of the Samaritan episode. As discussed, this episode—in both Josephus and in the rabbinic account—is bifurcated by the encounter between Alexander and the high priest. Both Josephus and the rabbinic account posit the Samaritan cultic centre as the focus of the first narrative segment. According to Josephus, Sanballat asked Alexander (after despairing of Darius), to erect a temple on Mt. Gerizim, while according to the rabbinic source the Samaritans sought the site of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.²⁷ The sole point of convergence is the Samaritan's interest in a cultic site; the rest of the details are incompatible. Josephus highlights the political struggle between the Jerusalemite elite and Sanballat, the Satrap of Samaria, which results in the construction of a Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim. In the rabbinic source, there is competition between Jews and Samaritans over the Temple site in Jerusalem that escalates into a violent struggle.

Regarding the second Samaritan episode, even the contours of the story have little in common. Josephus relates how the Samaritans constructed their temple but did not merit a royal visit or privileges identical to those of the Jews. The rabbinic story depicts the Samaritans' crushing defeat that wrought the destruction and devastation of Mt. Gerizim and acts of revenge against the

26 See e.g. *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, Pischa A, (ed. Horovitz-Rabin), 6. The issue was discussed by Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 120.

27 In *Scholion A* the Samaritans request Mt. Moriah; it seems that this version was adapted, to create a 'measure for measure' equation—Mt. Moriah against Mt. Gerizim.

Samaritan population. Both stories reflect Samaritan failure. In Josephus, this failure is a diplomatic one that can be suppressed whereas the rabbis depict a resounding military and religious defeat.

It seems there are two distinct types of similarities and affinities between Josephus and the rabbinic source: textual and structural-thematic. The only substantive linguistic affinities inhere with regard to the encounter between Alexander and the high priest and these indicate that Josephus and the rabbis made use of a unified textual source. Alongside these similarities, there are also structural-thematic affinities. The rabbis and Josephus frame the story of the encounter between Alexander and the high priest in the context of the struggle between Jews and Samaritans. Both drew from the book of Ezra-Nehemiah from which they extracted the first Samaritan episode. Josephus used the concluding verses while the Talmudic source relates to the conflict between the returnees from Babylon and the “people of the land”. Due to divergent plot lines, the last episode that describes the Samaritan defeat manifests very differently in Josephus and in the rabbinic source. Josephus focuses on the privileges accorded by Alexander, while the *Scholion*, preoccupied with elucidating the “day of Mt. Gerizim”, exploits the remnants of an ancient tradition regarding John Hyrcanus’ campaign against the Samaritans.

The Sitz im Leben

The rabbis and Josephus extracted their depiction of the encounter between the high priest and Alexander from a two-faceted ancient tradition: a coherent textual tradition regarding the encounter between Alexander and the high priest and an additional tradition that determined that Alexander’s arrival correlated with the conflict with the Samaritans. This tradition was not textually solidified: it remained relatively inchoate and therefore its transmission modes were wide-ranging. In this section, I will suggest historical and literary contexts for the creation of the story’s various components and for the transformations that they underwent as the tradition evolved over the generations.

Alexander and the High Priest

Ostensibly, the incentive to compose a story about the encounter between Alexander and the high priest is self-evident. The fairy-tale image of the young Macedonian conqueror and the new world order that he embodied was universally captivating. Jews were no exception and even they doubtlessly sought

some form of association with Alexander the Great.²⁸ While this might reasonably account for motivation, the historical circumstances that shaped the story, in its surviving format, still warrant exploration. Shaye Cohen's exhaustive analysis of the encounter story has revealed the existence of two motifs. The first is 'adventus'—the depiction of the imposing and glorious arrival of the visiting ruler. This motif is expressed in the description of the preparations and the adornment of the city in anticipation of Alexander's visit and the depiction of his distinguished retinue. The second motif is 'epiphany'—the Divine revelation through which God's power is revealed to the ruler. Cohen has contended that the two motifs represent two phases of the story's compilation. However, he acknowledged the inseparability of the two motifs. In my view, both motifs—taken together—articulate the Jews' situation in the Hellenistic period. Several depictions of foreign rulers' attitude to the Temple have survived from this period. Some are largely negative, such as Ptolemy Lagides' devious conquest of Jerusalem in 312 BCE. Some are favourable, such as the charter of privileges granted by Antiochus III to the Jews of the Land of Israel, most of which were devoted to the upkeep of the Temple (Josephus, *Ant.* 12:140–144).²⁹ Heliodorus' raid on the Temple reveals the Jerusalemite Jews' concern for the sanctity of the Temple and their desire for a theophany through which God's greatness would be demonstrated to the gentile ruler (*2 Macc.* 3). Evidently, any arrival of a gentile ruler to the region was fraught with hope and apprehension: concern that the ruler would harm the Temple in the name of a foreign deity alongside anticipation of the Jewish God's manifestation that would reveal His

28 This is a recurring phenomenon in Jewish history and I will suffice with two examples. The founding story of Ashkenazic Jewry's tells of Charlemagne's invitation to the Jews to settle in his empire. On this legend and its historical kernel see Aryeh Grabois, "Le souvenir et la legende de Charlemagne dans les textes hebraïques medievales", *Le Moyen Age* 72 (1966): 5–41 and the critique of Avraham Grossman, *The Early Sages of Ashkenaz: Their Lives, Leadership and Works (900–1096)* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1981), 29–40, esp. 39–40, n. 50. An example from the modern period—a famous story popular among American Jews recounts a meeting between George Washington and a Jewish soldier on Hanukkah, during the American Revolutionary War, see Ron Wolfson, and Joel L. Grishaver, *Hanukkah: The Family Guide to Spiritual Celebration* (2nd edition) (Woodstock VT.: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001), 23–24.

29 A visit by Antiochus to Jerusalem is not recorded but perhaps Polybius' report, quoted by Josephus, regarding a theophany at the Temple (*Ant.* 12:136) is an allusion to this. On the authenticity of Antiochus' privileges for the Jews see Jörg-Dieter Gauger, "Antiochos III und Artaxerxes: Der Fremdherrscher als Wohltäter", *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007): 196–225.

might and convince the foreign ruler of His greatness.³⁰ It seems reasonable to me that the story of Alexander's entry into the Temple, with its dual motifs, primarily reflects the deep hopes and fears of the priests of Jerusalem during the Hellenistic period. The endless succession of regimes and perpetual warfare represented an unremitting threat to the Temple's sanctity. However, this threat also held out the possibility that acknowledgement of the power and superiority of the Jewish God might be forthcoming. The Alexander story—the threat and the wondrous deliverance—became the archetypical story of the Hellenistic period and of the Jewish-Greek encounter, through the intertwined optimism and vulnerability that it conveyed. The story likely assumed its shape and its linguistic format in priestly *milieus*.³¹ These circles related the story and transmitted it in a more or less consistent version and as such, it found its way to Josephus' book and to rabbinic lore.

The Samaritan Context

Both Josephus and the rabbis harness the story of Alexander's visit to the conflict with the Samaritans. The source of this affinity is the conception that viewed the noble Macedonian conqueror's persona as one worth entwining with success and victory in national conflicts. The *Scholion* retained an alternative tradition that relates how the descendants of the Canaanites approached Alexander and demanded that he restore to them the Land of Israel.³² At the conclusion of the struggle between the Canaanites and the Jews, Alexander confirmed the Jews' victory. In this story too, Alexander desires to go up to the Temple and thus arouses Jewish apprehension about violation of its sanctity.³³

30 On the story of Heliodoros story see Uriel Rappaport, "Did Heliodoros Try to Rob the Treasures of the Jerusalem Temple? Date and Probability of the Story of 11 Maccabees", *Revue des Études Juives*, 170 (2011): 3–19.

31 Vered Noam, "Lost Historical Traditions: between Josephus and the Rabbis", in *Sybilis, Scriptures, and Scrolls: John Collins at Seventy*, vol. 2, eds. Joel Baden, Hindy Najan, and Eibert Tigchelaar (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 1006, has classified several analogous stories that appear in Josephus and in rabbinic literature as priestly Temple-related legends that were in circulation at that time.

32 In another version the Egyptians and the Ishmaelites appear instead of the Canaanites.

33 At the end of the story the Temple is not profaned thanks to the discernment of the Jews' negotiator, however the end of the story is vague. On this story and its backdrop see Ory Amitay, "The Story of Gviha Ben-Psisa and Alexander the Great", *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 16 (2006): 61–74.

Evidently, the Jews, like other peoples, viewed the Macedonian conqueror as an impartial judge whose verdict in national conflicts might lend weight to their claims.³⁴ In addition to this general remark, it bears remembering that the troublesome Jewish/Samaritan conflict was longstanding, dating back to the beginning of the Persian period. Ben Sira, who lived at the turn of the third century BCE termed the Samaritans “the foolish people who dwell in Shechem” (Sirach 50:26). Josephus relates conflicts with the Samaritans in Egypt during the days of Ptolemy Philometer (the second quarter of the 2nd century BCE, *Ant.* 13:74–79).³⁵ The conflict culminated with John Hyrcanus’ campaign against the Samaritans between 111/12–108/9 BCE that concluded with the razing of the Samaritan temple and of the city of Samaria. In view of this, it is not surprising that the Jews exploited the arrival of Alexander to advance their territorial and religious claims against the Samaritans.

From History to Historiography—Josephus’ Story

The twin pillars of the ancient tradition were the relatively consolidated textual tradition regarding the encounter between Alexander and the high priest and the knowledge that this story was somehow linked to the conflict with the Samaritans. From this point on, the stories diverged and were differentiated to comport with each authors’ understanding and the story’s place in their work. Josephus pinpoints the encounter between Alexander and the high priest at the threshold between the biblical and post-biblical epochs. In his mind, the appropriate Samaritan episode is located where the Bible leaves off, the last verses of the book of Ezra-Nehemiah. The marriage of the son of the high priest to the daughter of the Samaritan Satrap was the final episode of the biblical

34 Jewish lore contains additional stories of Alexander as a judge. See the chapter by Aleksandra Klęczar in this book. During the confrontation between the Jews of Alexandria and its Greek population, the Jews insistently attributed their right to settle in the city to Alexander himself (Josephus, *Wars* 2:488; idem, *Cont. Ap.* 2:35, 37, 42–44), see the discussion of Aryeh Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 186–191, 282–286.

35 Indeed, many scholars envisioned a link between these events and the story of Alexander and the high priest. The first to propose the link was Zacharias Frankel, “Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Religionsgespräche”, *Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 4 (1855): 161–181; 205–218; 241–250; 410–413; 447–454 and in his footsteps a few scholars, among them Arnaldo Momigliano, *Essays on Ancient and Modern Judaism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 83–84.

period and therefore Josephus stressed to his readers that these events were contemporaneous with Alexander's crossing of the Hellespont (Josephus, *Ant.* 11:304–305). The choice of this point in time also enabled Josephus to insert the story of the construction of the Samaritan temple. The Bible obviously does not allude to the existence of this temple yet Josephus knew that this temple had existed and that it had been destroyed. The information that a descendant of the high priest had intermarried with the daughter of the Samaritan Satrap seemed a reasonable springboard for introducing the story of the ejected priest who had built for himself a competing temple. This is a fairly well-known phenomenon that also occurs in the depiction of the establishment of the temple of Onias in Egypt by Onias, the deposed high priest or by his son (Josephus, *War* 1:32–33; *Ant.* 13:62–73).³⁶ The second Samaritan episode that concludes Josephus' depiction is but a mirror image of the Jews' success.

Not satisfied with this, Josephus then goes on to relate how Alexander read about his upcoming success in the Persian war in the book of Daniel. This story is probably Josephus' own addition;³⁷ therefore, we can assume its purpose was to validate his personal conception of history. The interpolation of the book of Daniel into the picture imparts a historiosophic facet to the chronological bridge that Josephus built to link the biblical and post-biblical worlds. Josephus perceives the book of Daniel as key to understanding post-biblical world history.³⁸ The book, correctly interpreted, posits a timeline for the sequence

36 On the contradiction between Josephus' two depictions see Richard Last, "Onias IV and the δέσποτος ἐρὸς: Placing Antiquities 13.62–73 into the Context of Ptolemaic Land Tenure", *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 41 (2010): 496–497 and n. 7.

37 Cohen, "Alexander", 64. Additional motifs from the book of Daniel are interspersed throughout the story of Alexander and the high priest see Tropper, *Simeon the Righteous*, 132–133. The overt and hidden affinity to the book of Daniel attests its importance to Josephus.

38 On Josephus and the book of Daniel see Momigliano, *Essays*, 84–86. Mason discerned the importance of the book of Daniel to the understanding of post-biblical history according to Josephus (Steve Mason, "Josephus, Daniel and the Flavian House", in *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith*, eds. Fausto Parente and Joseph Sievers [Leiden: Brill, 1994]: 170–176; Bart J. Koet, "Trustworthy Dreams? About Dreams and References to Scripture in 2 Maccabees 14–15, Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 11.302–347 and in the New Testament", in *Persuasion and Dissuasion in Early Christianity, Ancient Judaism and Hellenism*, ed. Pieter W. Van der Horst et. al. [Leuven: Peeters, 2003], 99–100). Feldman also notes the importance of the book of Daniel to the understanding of history and cites, as evidence, the fact that Josephus mentions Daniel in the Alexander story (Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998], 630–631).

of empires that begets hope for the messianic age. While the Alexander and Jaddus story can be interpreted as a Jewish attempt to bask in the Greek conqueror's reflected glory,³⁹ the silent reading of the book of Daniel turns this theory on its head by subjugating the Greek king to the Jewish prophetic vision. As several scholars have demonstrated, additional motifs link the Alexander and Jaddus story to the book of Daniel.⁴⁰ The overt and hidden affinities between Daniel and Josephus' story exposit Alexander's reading of the book of Daniel as a biblical signpost that illuminates the path to interpreting post-biblical history.

From History to Ritual—The Day of Mt. Gerizim and *Megillat Taanit*

Rabbinic literature frames the story of Alexander and the high priest very differently from Josephus. *Megillat Taanit* is essentially a ritual text. It does not proceed chronologically, like Josephus' history; rather it is calendrically arranged, listing the annual holidays beginning from Nissan through Adar. The *Scholion's* author undertook the elucidation of the events underpinning each of the scroll's days of observance. Obviously, the name of the day of observance entitled "the day of Mt. Gerizim" prompted the *Scholion's* author to connect the event with some conflict with the Samaritans.⁴¹ The preformed story of Alexander and the high priest, together with the knowledge of its connection, somehow, to a conflict with the Samaritans, provided the point of departure for its explanation. Lacking any other traditions and knowing, perhaps, that

39 Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 197–198, emphasizes this aspect in particular and believes that the story's main purpose was to create for the Jews a sense of belonging in the Hellenistic world. Gruen also highlights Alexander's dominance as the Jews' hero expressed in his gifts, in the privileges that he bestowed on them, in his sacrifices and in his own interpretation of the book of Daniel (also see Sara R. Johnson, *Historical Fictions and Hellenistic Jewish Identity: Third Maccabees in its Cultural Context* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004], 75–76).

40 See above, n. 37.

41 Rabbinic literature relates a number of confrontations between the Samaritans and the rabbis over the sanctity of Mt. Gerizim, e.g. Gen. Rab. 32:19, for the overall topic see Emmanuel Friedheim, "Some Notes about the Samaritans and the Rabbinic Class at the Crossroads", in *Samaritans: Past and Present: Current Studies*, ed. Menachem Mor and Friedrich V. Reiterer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 164–204.

Alexander of Macedonia straddled the biblical and post-biblical epochs,⁴² the author of the *Scholion* went searching for the conflict's roots in the book of Ezra-Nehemiah. The confrontation between the 'enemies of Judah and Benjamin' and the returnees from Babylon over the building of the Temple—a struggle in which Persia, the ascendant foreign empire, was also involved, was a suitable paradigm for the reprise of this confrontation between Jews and Samaritans, this time on the backdrop of the rise of Alexander. The *Scholion's* author borrowed the conclusion of the story—that relates the destruction of Mt. Gerizim—from the remnants of an obscure tradition regarding the destruction of Samaria, against which "the day of Mt. Gerizim" was fixed.

Summary and Conclusions

It seems that the historians accompanying Alexander neglected to record an encounter between Alexander and a high priest or another representative of the tiny Jewish nation. However, the image of Alexander was too important to elude Jewish collective memory. The cohesive tradition concerning the encounter between Alexander and the high priest captured the essential relationship between the foreign ruler and the high priest with the succinct statement: "The image of one like this is what I see when I go down to war and I am victorious". The high priest is the one who leads the general's armies and who precipitates his incredible victories. At some stage, Alexander's persona was co-opted to the national-religious conflict between the Jews and the Samaritans, amplifying the story of the encounter with another layer. The relative fluidity of the tradition concerning Alexander, the high priest and the Samaritans, allowed later generations to tailor the story to their changing needs. For Flavius Josephus it bridged the divide between the biblical and post-biblical epochs; the rabbis harnessed the story to their own ritual exigencies.

42 Alexander's place at the end point of the Persian period is expressed in *Midrash Seder Olam* 30 (Chaim Milikowsky, *Seder Olam: Critical Edition, Commentary and Introduction*, vol. 1 [Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2013], 322) that determines that until Alexander, prophecy abounded in Israel; Alexander's arrival signalled the waning of prophesy and the dawning of the rabbinic age.

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The Reception of Alexander the Great in Roman, Byzantine and Early Modern Egypt*

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The principal point of reference for reception of Alexander the Great in Egypt has always been Alexandria, the greatest city bearing his name and one of the few cities established by Alexander in historical reality and not only in later legends, which attributed to him the foundation of as many as seventy-five cities.¹ On the testimony of the *Alexander Romance* the traditional date of the foundation of Alexandria, 25 Tybi (7 April 331 BC) remained the official municipal holiday until the second half of the third c. AD, the date of composition of the book.² A feature of this holiday was the custom of feeding benevolent snakes on 25 Tybi, allegedly introduced by Alexander and connected with the cult of Agathos Daimon/Šai. Indeed in the late-Imperial tradition enshrined in the *Alexander Romance* and in the *Alexandrian World Chronicle* (*Chronographia Alexandrina*) the founding of Alexandria was the top achievement of Alexander, the one which earned him immortality.³ In the Alexandria of the Early Empire its founder was present through institutions and visible signs: his cult, temples, statues, tomb and spectacular buildings initiated on his orders, even if actually constructed one or two generations after his death. Herodian and the *Historia Augusta* contain an anecdote of mockery poured on Caracalla by inhabitants of Alexandria for his imitation of Alexander.⁴ This story is probably true and indeed it explains the reason for a massacre in Alexandria as revenge exacted by Caracalla.⁵ It shows too that for the educated Roman audience of

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1 For a (very) critical assessment of the tradition on Alexander's foundation see Peter M. Fraser, *Cities of Alexander the Great* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

2 Ps.-Callisth. I 32.11.

3 Ps.-Callisth. I 33–34, III 24. *ELB*, the best witness to the *Chronographia Alexandrina*, commonly refers to Alexander as the Founder (*Conditor*: I 6.6; I 8.4, 5, 6; II 5.2, 6; II 6.1, 4).

4 Hdn. IV 9.1–3; *HA Ant. Carac.* 2.1–2.

5 D.C. LVII 23.1–3. Dora Baharal, "Caracalla and Alexander the Great: A Reappraisal", in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 7, ed. Carl Deroux (Brussels: Latomus, 1994), 547.

late antiquity the particular emotional ties between Alexandria and its founder were something obvious.

By virtue of being the founder of Alexandria, Alexander received the heroic *ktistes*-cult, certainly not later than the reign of Ptolemy I Soter, and on the date of the death of Alexander which was remembered in Alexandria until late antiquity in conjunction with the *ktistes*-cult.⁶ Presumably in the later Ptolemaic and in Roman times Alexander's tomb was the *locus* of the heroic *ktistes*-cult of Alexander and the heroic offerings first performed by Ptolemy I very likely continued until later antiquity.⁷ Nikolaos of Myra testifies that a magnificent mounted statue of Alexander-*ktistes* could be seen in Alexandria as late as the end of the fourth c. AD.⁸ Ptolemy I had probably established also the second, divine cult of Alexander and built his temple. This divine worship of Alexander was linked with the dynastic cult of the Ptolemies,⁹ and it outlived the demise of the Ptolemaic rule in Egypt. The spurious last will of Alexander stipulates that the high priest of his cult should be a high-born person, endowed with important personal and financial privileges, such as release from the requirement for liturgies.¹⁰ Indeed, in Ptolemaic and Roman times, high priests of Alexander were persons of high position in Egypt, a testimony to which is the practice of invoking their names in the dates of Ptolemaic edicts and of contracts, while in Alexandria they were eponymous officials.¹¹ The elevated position of high priest of Alexander was underscored by his ceremonial dress with a golden crown and purple cloth.¹²

6 HA, Alexander 5; Val. III 60: *obitus tamen eius diem etiam nuns Alexandriae sacratissimum habent*. Christian Habicht, *Gottmenschentum und die griechische Städte*² (Munich: Beck 1970), 36.

7 D.S. XVIII 28.4: κατεσκευάσεν οὖν τέμενος κατὰ τὸ μέγεθος καὶ κατὰ τὴν κατασκευὴν τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου δόξης ἄξιον, ἐν ᾧ κηδεύσας αὐτὸν καὶ θυσίσαις ἡρωικαῖς καὶ ἀγῶσι μεγαλοπρεπέσι τιμῆσας. Lily R. Taylor "The cult of Alexander in Alexandria", *Classical Philology* 22 (1927): 166; Habicht, *Gottmemenschentum*, 36.

8 Nikolaos of Myra, ap. Ps.-Lib., *Progymnasmata* 27. Andrew F. Stewart, *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 247.

9 Peter M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 212–226; Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 247–252.

10 Ps.-Callisth. III 33.19–20.

11 Habicht, *Gottmemenschentum*, 36; Willy Clarysse, Griet van der Veken and Sven P. Vleeming, *The Eponymous Priests of Ptolemaic Egypt (P. L. Bat. 24): Chronological Lists of the Priests of Alexandria and Ptolemais with a Study of the Demotic Transcriptions of their Names* (Leiden: Brill, 1983).

12 Ps.-Callisth. II 21.19 and III 33.20. Taylor "Alexander in Alexandria", 163–164.

The most celebrated object in Alexandria naturally, associated with its founder, was Alexander's tomb. Alexander's will to be put to rest in Siwah,¹³ in the seat of his divine father Ammon, was disregarded by his companions: Perdikkas, who had decided on burial in the necropolis of Macedonian kings in Aigai,¹⁴ and Ptolemy who hijacked Alexander's body to inter it in Egypt.¹⁵ The original resting place was in Memphis, possibly within the complex of the temple of Nektanebo II.¹⁶ On the evidence of Pausanias, Alexander's body was transferred to Alexandria by Ptolemy II,¹⁷ although some think that this had already happened during the reign of Ptolemy I.¹⁸ At that time a tomb of Alexander must have been in existence in Alexandria, to be replaced in 215 BC by a new one constructed on the orders of Ptolemy IV within the royal necropolis.¹⁹ The monumental tomb of Alexander is referred in our sources as σῆμα ("tomb") or σῶμα ("dead body, corpse").²⁰

In the Imperial age the tomb of Alexander was a focal point of Alexandria, frequented by most visitors to this city.²¹ The first most celebrated visit to the

13 D.S. XVIII 3.5; Curt. X 5.4; Just. XIII 4.6.

14 Paus. I 6.3.

15 D.S. XVIII 28.2–6; Str. XVII 1.8; Paus. I 6.3; Ael. VH XII 64; Arr. Succ. fr. 1.25 and 24, Ross = FGrH 156 F 9.25 and 10.1.

16 *Marmor Parium*, IG XII.5.444 II 2a = FGrH 239 B11; Curt. X 10.20; Paus. I 6.3. Michał Pietrzykowski, *Rzeźby greckie z Sarapeum memfickiego. Studium ikonograficzne* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1976); Andreas Schmidt-Colinet, "Das Grab Alexanders des Grossen in Memphis", in *The Problematics of Power: Eastern and Western Representations of Alexander the Great*, ed. Margaret Bridges and Johann C. Bürgel (Bern: Peter Lang, 1996). Andrew Erskine, "Life after Death: Alexandria and the Body of Alexander the Great", *Greece and Rome* 49 (2002), 163–179; Andrew Chugg, "The Sarcophagus of Alexander the Great", *Greece and Rome* 49 (2002): 8–26; Andrew M. Chugg, *The Lost Tomb of Alexander the Great* (London: Periplus, 2004), 47–65; Alexander Demandt, *Alexander der Grosse. Leben und Legende* (Munich: Beck, 2009), 350.

17 Paus. I 7.1. 15–16, II, Fraser, *Ptolemaic*, 31–32; Christian Habicht, "Argaeus, Ptolemy II and Alexander's Corpse", *The Ancient History Bulletin* 2 (1988); Heinrich Schlange-Schöningen, "Alexandria-Memphis-Siwa: wo liegt Alexander der Grosse begraben", *Antike Welt* 27 (1996): 109–119; Chugg, *Lost Tomb*, 47–57.

18 Richard A. Hazzard, *Imagination of a Monarchy: Studies in Ptolemaic Propaganda* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 54.

19 Zen. 3.94. Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 224; Judith S. McKenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt, c. 300 BC to A.D. 700* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 64–65.

20 Str. XVII 1.8, Zen. 3.94; Ps.-Callisth. III 34.6.

21 Nicholas J. Saunders, *Alexander's Tomb: The Two Thousand Year Obsession to Find the Lost*

tomb of Alexander was that of Julius Caesar,²² then of Octavian, one of many Roman admirers of Alexander who professed to have spared Alexandria on account of its founder and the god Serapis.²³ Octavian, when offered a tour of tombs of the Ptolemies too, allegedly replied “I wished to see a king not dead people”.²⁴ The historicity of Octavian’s scornful remark notwithstanding, it aptly illustrates the unequal fate of the pre-Roman past of Egypt in the Roman eye: the elevated status of Alexander juxtaposed to the despised Ptolemaic dynasty, a paragon for decline and corruption. Apart from Octavian, soon to become Augustus, two more visits of Roman emperors to the mausoleum of Alexander are attested in our sources: that of Septimius Severus in AD 199–220 and that of Caracalla in AD 215.²⁵ Although we have no express evidence for it, it is extremely unlikely that other Emperors and members of the Imperial family known to have paid a visit to Alexandria—Germanicus, Vespasian and Hadrian—did not see the mausoleum of Alexander.²⁶

The exact location for the tomb of Alexander in Alexandria is unknown. What can be learned from ancient sources is that it was placed in the middle of the city,²⁷ within the Royal Quarter.²⁸ Some modern scholars believe that ca. AD 400 the church of Elijah and St. John was constructed on top of the tomb of Alexander in the area of Kom el-Dikka,²⁹ but its location within Kom el-Dikka has been convincingly refuted by relatively recent Polish archaeological excavations.³⁰ Despite extensive efforts by archaeologists and enthusiasts of Alexander alike, no certain trace of the tomb has been found in Alexandria.³¹

Conqueror, (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 79–94; Marjorie S. Venit, “Alexandria”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, ed. Christiana Riggs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 109.

22 Luc. x 19–22. Chugg, *Lost Tomb*, 105–106.

23 D.C. LI 16.3–4.

24 D.C. LI 16.5, also Suet. *Aug.* 18.2.

25 D.C. LXXV 13 and Hdn. IV 8.9; S. Aurelius Victor, *Epitome*, 21.4; John of Antioch fr. 157, Mariev; *Suda*, s.v. Ἀντωνῖνος, respectively.

26 Chugg, *Lost Tomb*, 114–130.

27 Zen. 3.94.

28 Str. XVII 1.8.

29 Fraser, *Ptolemaic*, II, 34–38; Gianfranco Fiaccadori, “The Tomb of Alexander the Great: An Outline for an Essay”, *La Parola del passato* 47 (1992): 128–131; Schlange-Schöningen, “Alexandria-Memphis-Siwa”, 116–117.

30 Adam Łukaszewicz, “Alexander and Alexandria—a View from Kom el-Dikka”, in *Alexander the Great and Egypt: History, Art, Tradition*, ed. Volker Grieb, Krzysztof Nawotka and Agnieszka Wojciechowska (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 310–314.

31 Saunders, *Alexander’s Tomb*, 191–205.

So far the only somewhat likely candidate for a trace of it is the so-called Alabaster Tomb, an early Ptolemaic antechamber of a monumental tomb, excavated in 1907 by E. Breccia in the Old Latin cemetery in Alexandria. The splendour of the antechamber, constructed of enormous slabs of alabaster, and the uniquely Macedonian character of the tomb, originally covered by a tumulus, show that it must have been a royal monument.³² Its early Ptolemaic age makes it possible that it is the remaining trace of the tomb of Alexander of 215 BC.³³ The Alabaster Tomb belongs to the area identified as the central section of the Ptolemaic Alexandria, in the Imperial age called the μέσον πέδιον/ meditullium/ Mesopedium,³⁴ perhaps identical with the ἐπώνυμος Ἀλεξάνδρου τόπος of Achilles Tatius.³⁵

Nor is it known when and under what circumstances the mausoleum of Alexander disappeared. The last sure report of it are accounts of the visit of Caracalla in AD 215. Therefore some modern scholars believe that the tomb of Alexander was destroyed during clashes between the troops of Aurelian and the Palmyrenes in AD 272.³⁶ This is, however, far from certain and quite unlikely since Zenobia's garrisons in Egypt surrendered to Aurelian without much resistance.³⁷ There is later evidence that the Brucheion district of Alexandria suffered much damage and, in the fourth c., was largely deserted,³⁸ but with no hint on the fate of the tomb of Alexander which may in fact mean that it survived the turmoil of the late third c. untouched.³⁹ Nor is there any evidence that it was destroyed by the earthquake and tsunami which hit Alexandria on 21 July 365. The tomb of Alexander is mentioned expressly three times in a fourth c. context. Little can be made of an anecdote related in the *Suda* that Severus, a

32 Marjorie S. Venit, *Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria: The Theater of the Dead* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6–9.

33 This idea comes from Achille Adriani, *La tomba di Alessandro. Realtà, ipotesi e fantasie* (Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2000). Cf. the critical assessment of this identification and of later archaeological research in the area: Saunders, *Alexander's Tomb*, 163–172.

34 Ps.-Callisth. I 32.5; Val. I 28.

35 Ach.Tat. v 1.3. Łukaszewicz, "Alexander and Alexandria", 307.

36 Peter Green, "Alexander's Alexandria", in *Alexandria and Alexandrianism: Papers delivered at a symposium organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities and held at the Museum, April 22–25, 1993*, 3–28, Malibu: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996, 18, 24; Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 28, 340–341.

37 Tadeusz Kotula, *Aurélien et Zénobie. L'unité ou la division de l'Empire?* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1997), 136.

38 Amm. XII 16.15; Epiphanius, *De mensuris et ponderibus*, ll. 259–260.

39 Chugg, *Lost Tomb*, 148–154; Saunders, *Alexander's Tomb*, 92.

fourth-c. AD sophist from Alexandria, had his books containing secret knowledge locked in the tomb of Alexander,⁴⁰ as it most likely simply repeats the story of Septimius Severus allegedly storing similar books inside it.⁴¹ More credence has been given to John Chrysostom and Theodoretos who say that the tomb of Alexander is unknown which should mean that it disappeared before 391.⁴² But this is no more than rhetoric aimed at belittling pagans and their monuments, with John Chrysostom claiming that even the day of the death of Alexander is unknown and Theodoretos naming as non-existent even those tombs which have survived to the present day, e.g. the mausoleum of Hadrian. Far greater value can be attributed to Libanios who says that ca. 390 Alexander's corpse was on display in Alexandria.⁴³ This either means that Alexander's mummified body was salvaged from the ruined tomb, or, more likely, that Alexander's mausoleum survived until the end of the fourth c.⁴⁴ If so, it can be connected with a mid-fourth c. story in Ammianus Marcellinus about Georgios, the bishop of Alexandria: *reuersus e comitatu principis cum transiret per speciosum Genii templum multitudine stipatus ex more, flexis ad aedem ipsam luminibus 'quam diu' inquit 'sepulchrum hoc stabit?'*⁴⁵ Clearly, ca. 360 there was a monument (tomb cum temple of Genius) in Alexandria capable of attracting crowds of visitors. Out of those deities which could be called the protective spirit of Alexandria (Genius) only Alexander had his tomb in the city and, incidentally, in the Roman age he was identified with the benevolent snake Agathos Daimon (Genius of Alexandria), being referred to as the "serpent-gendered hero".⁴⁶ Therefore Ammianus most likely refers in this passage to the tomb, still present in the heart of the city and still being the focal point of its population.⁴⁷

The testimony of pagan authors Ammianus and Libanios speaks to the continued existence of the tomb until the late fourth c. But then no historical

40 Suda, s.v. Σεβήρος and *Exc. Val.* 346 (p. 737).

41 D.C. LXXV 13.2. Łukaszewicz, "Alexander and Alexandria", 311.

42 Ioannes Chrisostomos, *In epistulam 11 ad Corinthios*, PG LXI, p. 581; Theodoretos, *Graecorum affectionum curatio* VIII 60–61. Alan Rowe, "A Contribution to the Archaeology of the Western Desert iii", *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 38 (1955): 155, n. 5; Schlange-Schöningen, "Alexandria-Memphis-Siwa", 109; Saunders, *Alexander's Tomb*, 105.

43 Lib. *Or.* 49.12.

44 Saunders, *Alexander's Tomb*, 102–104.

45 Amm. XXII 11.7.

46 Ps.-Callisth I 33.11: ὁφιογενής. Taylor, "Alexander in Alexandria"; Pierre Jouguet, "La date alexandrine de la fondation d'Alexandrie", *Revue des études anciennes* 42 (1940): 192–197; Chugg, *Lost Tomb*, 154–157.

47 Chugg, *Lost Tomb*, 157; Saunders, *Alexander's Tomb*, 100–101.

evidence survives and it looks as if the Christian authors preferred not to notice it in Alexandria. The mausoleum of Alexander, on evidence of Ammianus so strongly identified by bishop Georgios as a part of the pagan identity of Alexandria, may have fallen victim to the wrath of the Christian mob at the same time as the Great Sarapeum (391/392),⁴⁸ or, in the fifth c. and later, it may have lost its former significance in the then predominantly Christian city which let it slip into oblivion.

There is little doubt that Egypt's greatest contribution to the reception of Alexander the Great has been the *Alexander Romance*, the most widely circulating non-religious book in the Middle Ages and early modern times.⁴⁹ Its author, anonymous to us and referred to as Ps.-Callisthenes, was a person intimately familiar with native Egyptian culture and literature, hence most probably a Hellenized Egyptian, with the typical high-class educational background. He was surely a resident of Alexandria, as attested by his exceptional knowledge of local topography and the fierce Alexandrian patriotism. Ps.-Callisthenes shares important characteristics with better known pagan authors of later antiquity, both in what he writes about and what he avoids, never alluding to Christianity, extolling important pagan places of worship in Alexandria, the Great Serapeum and the Tychaion, and subscribing to themes popular in philosophy of the age of the early Empire. The *Alexander Romance* is a multi-layered work, with some parts ultimately traceable to the early Hellenistic age, in its finite form created in the mid-third c. AD, in the age of the renewed interest in Alexander the Great among intellectuals, political elites and the general public alike. Despite its title, conventionally used in modern languages, the *Alexander Romance* is not an ancient novel or romance, but rather a literary work belonging in the grey area between the "serious" ancient biography and the fictional biography, such as the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* of Flavius Philostratos, or the anonymous *Life of Aesop*. Unlike traditional biographies, the *Alexander Romance* does not study Alexander's character and its gradual degeneration, presenting instead his portrait so idealized that some call it a

48 Saunders, *Alexander's Tomb*, 104–105. The date of the destruction of the Serapeum: Johannes Hahn, "Vetus error extinctus est. Wann wurde das Sarapeion von Alexandria zerstört?", *Historia* 55 (2006): 368–383. with reservations in: Richard W. Burgess and Jitse H.F. Dijkstra, "The 'Alexandrian World Chronicle', its Consularia and the Date of the Destruction of the Serapeum (with an Appendix on the List of Praefecti Augustales)", *Millennium* 10 (2013): 96–102.

49 For reference to the paragraph on the Greek *Alexander Romance* see: Krzysztof Nawotka, *Ps. Callisthenes, Alexander Romance: A Historical Commentary*, Leiden: Brill, 2017, "Introduction".

hagiography of Alexander. Even if son of an Egyptian god Ammon of Siwah or an Egyptian pharaoh (Nektanebo II), Alexander is here no less a paragon of Greek culture: educated by Aristotle, wise, magnanimous, reverent to gods, always full of restraint and dignity. In the *Alexander Romance* Alexander's image is purified from vices, profusely attested in other sources: heavy drinking, fits of rage. The Alexander of Ps.-Callisthenes is conspicuously asexual, both in hetero- and homosexual domains.

The *Alexander Romance* attributes to Alexander the erection of some of the most famous buildings of Alexandria: the Great Serapeum, the Serapeum of Parmeniskos, the *heroon* of Agathos Daimon, and names the Tychaion in the context of construction works conducted on Alexander's orders.⁵⁰ The Great Serapeum was certainly later than Alexander: erected by Ptolemy III Euergetes, although some works may have begun under Ptolemy II Philadelphus, if not under Ptolemy I Soter.⁵¹ Attributing this temple and other prominent buildings of Alexandria to Alexander is ahistorical but not necessarily invented by Ps.-Callisthenes. His preferred method of work was building his text from data extracted from earlier authorities, often obscure and rarely quoted by other ancient authors, rather than inventing them *ex nihilo*.⁵² It is likely, therefore, that also here he was relating local legends about some prominent buildings of Alexandria allegedly commissioned by Alexander and not by the Ptolemies.

Late-antique Alexandria produced another literary work of great influence: the *Alexandrian World Chronicle*, lost but best attested in a late (eighth c.?) Latin derivative rendition commonly referred to as the *Excerpta Latina Barbari* (*ELB*), now conveniently accessible in Garstad's excellent edition.⁵³ The *Alexandrian World Chronicle* (*Chronographia Alexandrina*) stands in the centre of an impressive web of over a dozen of late-antique and early medieval chronicles, chronographs, and consular lists,⁵⁴ among them the *ELB*, *Chronographia Golenischevensis*, and *Chronicon Paschale*. These writings are of the

50 Serapeum: Ps.-Callisth. I 33.1 (followed by John Malalas VIII 1 and the *Suda*, s.v. Σάραπις); Serapeum of Parmeniskos: I 33.13; heroon of Agathos Daimon: I 32.7 and 10; Tychaion: I 31.4. Fraser, *Ptolemaic*, II, 392–393.

51 Judith S. McKenzie, Sheila Gibson and Andres T. Reyes, "Reconstructing the Serapeum in Alexandria from the Archaeological Evidence", *Journal of Roman Studies* 94 (2004): 73–121.

52 Krzysztof Nawotka, "History into literature in the account of the Campaign of Gaugamela in the *Alexander Romance*" (forthcoming).

53 Benjamin Garstad, *Apocalypse: Pseudo-Methodius. An Alexandrian World Chronicle* (Cambridge MS and London: Harvard University Press, 2012).

54 Burgess and Dijkstra, "Alexandrian", figure 1 on p. 56. I follow them in terminology allied to these late works.

greatest importance for study of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages and have been a matter of scholarly debate almost exclusively from this point of view.⁵⁵ The last event which was mentioned in the *Chronographia Alexandrina* is the death of Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria in 412, and there is a general agreement in the scholarship that it was composed very soon after this event, perhaps in 412.⁵⁶ The reconstructed *Chronographia Alexandrina* is a work of complex origin which drew on a number of earlier sources, most notably the *Liber generationis*, often referred to as the *Chronicle* of Hippolytus of AD 235, the regnal lists derived ultimately from the *Chronographiae* of Julius Africanus of AD 221, and a Greek source stemming from the *Consularia Italica*.⁵⁷ It also contains some material on Alexander the Great not derived from these sources. The *Chronographia Alexandrina* underwent augmentation and alterations at several stages until it was translated into Latin to become the *ELB*. In Garstad's reconstruction the material on Alexander was added ca. 536–539 during the alterations of the text preceding sending the book as a gift from Constantinople to Theudebert I, the Merovingian king of Austrasia, and it must have happened in Alexandria because of the strong local colouring: *conditor*, or founder as the common epithet of Alexander and the position of prominence of the Ptolemaic dynasty.⁵⁸ Significantly, after the list of Alexander's achievements the chronology of world history is summarized as *Fiunt vero ab Adam usque ad finem Alexandri conditoris simul anni milia CXXXVII, et ab obito Alexandri usque ad Cleopatram illam Egyptiam anni ducenti XCIIII sic*, and this is followed by the account of the Ptolemaic history.⁵⁹ There are, however, significant parallels between the *ELB* and other writings in the tradition of the *Chronographia Alexandrina*, most notably the *Chronicon Paschale*: in the unique list of cities founded by Alexander, and in the entry on the Jewish high priest Iaddus/Jaddua in whose times Alexander founded Alexandria and paid visit to Jerusalem.⁶⁰ Since the *ELB* and the *Chronicon Paschale* are not directly related, these close parallels most probably originate in the common ancestor of both texts and thus they may speak to the much earlier presence of the material on Alexander in the *Chronographia Alexandrina*, perhaps even in the original early-fifth c. form of the book.

55 For reference see Burgess and Dijkstra, "Alexandrian".

56 Garstad, *Apocalypse*, xxii–xxiii; Burgess and Dijkstra, "Alexandrian", 49–58.

57 Garstad, *Apocalypse*, xxiv–xxv; Burgess and Dijkstra, "Alexandrian", 46–47.

58 Garstad, *Apocalypse*, xxvi–xxviii.

59 *ELB* I 8.6 and I 9.

60 *Chronicon Paschale*, pp. 321, 357 and 390 vs. *ELB* I 8.6 and II 6.4.

The material on Alexander in the *ELB* is very peculiar. Apart from short notices on his succession to the throne after Philip II, his victories over Darius, and founding Alexandria, the *ELB* narrates in surprising detail the division of the empire of Alexander, allegedly stemming from his death-bed decision, and lists Alexander's life achievements: conquests and the founding of cities.⁶¹ These longer sections correspond closely, in content and arrangement of material, to the spurious Testament of Alexander surviving in the Greek version in the *Alexander Romance*.⁶² There is no doubt, therefore, that Ps.-Callisthenes is the ultimate principal source on Alexander in the tradition of the *Chronographia Alexandrina*.

Not unlike other late-antique chronicles and histories, the *Alexandrian World Chronicle* tried to amalgamate Biblical and Classical history, covering history from the creation of Adam to the consulate of Valentinian and Eutropius in 387. The story of Alexander, borrowed mostly from the *Alexander Romance*, was reworked to fit the world view espoused by the Christian author of the *Chronographia Alexandrina*. Alexander is carefully purified of all heathen elements, he is no longer son of Ammon, his Testament lacks dispositions concerning pagan temples and priests of Alexander himself. And, having founded Alexandria, he goes to Jerusalem to worship the true God: *Ut enim condidit Alexander Alexandriam contra Egyptum, veniens in Hierusolima domino deo adorvait dicens: Gloria tibi, deus solus omnia tenens, qui vivis in saecula*.⁶³ The *Chronographia*, while borrowing freely from the pagan *Alexander Romance*, took the first step into assimilating Alexander to Christian culture which was to become an important feature of his legends in the Middle Ages.

The *Alexander Romance*, whose original Greek form known as recension α is lost, has survived in a number of Greek versions; it gained enormous popularity both in the West, mainly through Latin and vernacular versions ultimately derived from the 10th-c. Latin translation of Leo of Naples, and in the East, in a great number of versions mostly derived from the early seventh-c. Syriac translation. Six different Medieval Persian renditions testify to the enormous popularity of the *Alexander Romance* in Iran and largely thanks to the inclusion of the *Romance*-derived stories in the *Šāh-nāma* of Ferdowsī Alexander, paradoxically, became a national hero of Iran (see Nawotka in this volume). This was not quite so in Medieval and early modern Egypt. Only one Coptic version of the *Alexander Romance* is known, preserved in a very fragmentary state. The

61 *ELB* I 8.5–6.

62 Ps.-Callisth. III 33.2–25 (Testament) and 35 (summary of achievements).

63 *ELB* I 8.4.

unique manuscript once housed in the library of the White Monastery in Sohag, opposite Akhmim (Panopolis), the birthplace of Nonnos and an important centre of learning and monastic activity in late-antique Egypt, in the 1880s and 1890s was acquired in pieces for various European libraries.⁶⁴ The library of the White Monastery consisted both of codices written locally, and brought from Touton, Tebtunis and other places.⁶⁵ Some codices were divided and dispersed among various (more than twenty-four!) modern collections.⁶⁶ The *Alexander Romance* was written in a codex of cotton paper of around 37 chapters on ca. 220 pages, out of which only nine folios survive, with one unattached fragment of unsure place in the original text.⁶⁷ These fragments occupy ca. 18 pages in a modern standard edition, while the Greek *Alexander Romance* is printed on 146 pages in Kroll's edition with a copious apparatus, with the text alone taking up ca. 80 pages. The Syriac text in Budge's edition is printed on 253 pages. The Coptic text which we have now is but a small fragment of the original length of the book. A modern reader can access the Coptic text in Lemm's edition.⁶⁸ There are also German and English translations.⁶⁹

Since the surviving Coptic text has rarely been a matter of academic discussion, a summary of its nine fragments is necessary. Fragment 1 shows a meeting of a few envoys, probably to the king of the Lamites; one of them is Alexander disguised as his ambassador. The Persian envoy Eleazar invites them all to his house. They lament their families and countries and Alexander most of all. In fragment 2 the city of the Lamites is taken, presumably by Alexander's troops. Eleazar despoils the city and a certain Iôdaê becomes its governor. A story of Antipater, the son of a king and probably one of the messengers follows. The stories in this fragment, similarly as that in fragment 1, are unknown to other

64 Gaston Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (Santa Barbara and Oxford: ABC-CLIO (first published 1915), 2002), 243–244; Daniel L. Selden, “The Coptic Alexander Romance”, in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages* ed. Zachary D. Zuwiyya (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 134; Harald Froschauer and Cornelia E. Römer, *Spätantike Bibliotheken. Leben und Lesen in den frühen Klöstern Ägyptens* (Vienna: Phoibos-Verlag, 2008), 5.

65 Tito Orlandi, “The Library of the Monastery of Saint Shenute at Atripe”, in *Perspectives on Panopolis: An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest: Acts from an International Symposium Held in Leiden on 16, 17 and 18 December 1998* ed. Arno Egberts, Brian P. Muhs and Joeb van der Vliet (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 213, 220.

66 Froschauer and Römer, *Spätantike Bibliotheken*, 6. 8–9.

67 Selden, “Coptic”, 134.

68 Oskar E. Lemm, *Der Alexanderroman bei den Kopten: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Alexander-sage im Orient: Text, Übersetzung, Anmerkungen* (St.-Petersbourg: Commissionnaires de l'Académie impériale des sciences, 1903).

69 Lemm, *Alexanderroman* and Maspero, *Popular stories*, respectively.

versions of the *Alexander Romance*. Some of its features, however, like taking of a city and accumulation of precious stones in the narrative, reminds us of Alexander's adventures in the land of Queen Kandake. In fragment 3 Alexander is in Gedrosia, apparently condemned by a local king to be cast into a chasm, called Chaos. At the price of the promise of half of his kingdom he is rescued by a certain Antilochos who bribed the guardians of Chaos so that they threw a rock into Chaos instead of Alexander. Fragment 4 continues the story of Alexander in Gedrosia. He is now in hiding in the house of Antilochos, while the rumour of his death spreads in Gedrosia. One of Alexander's companions, Menander, has a dream related to the death of Alexander and the tidings of the death of Alexander are brought to Menander and two other of Alexander's companions, Selpharios and Diatrophe. Fragment 5 continues the story of Alexander's reported death: Selpharios proclaims mourning of Alexander and fasting, while Agrikolaos, king of the Persians, calls his people to celebrate the death of Alexander. Alexander, mounting Chiron, apparently a centaur, comes to Menander, Selpharios and Diatrophe to tell them about his adventures and orders the execution of Agrikolaos. Then he summons his iliarchs. In the much damaged fragment 6 some new names are introduced: Jeremiah, Drakontios, Sergios and Philea. The rest of this fragment is devoted to Selpharios writing his last will to hand it over to Alexander. Fragment 7 brings Alexander together with Menander, Selpharios and Diathrope to the garden from which four rivers of sweet water flow: Pison, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates. Then they penetrated the land of darkness, having encountered precious stones lying on the ground. A disembodied voice spoke to Alexander three times. When asked, Alexander revealed his desire to rule the world and this was promised to him but his imminent death was also announced. Yet Alexander somehow managed to postpone this moment, as in the much damaged fragment 8 he is in India meeting the Brahmans. In fragment 9 Alexander orders Krateros to go to Macedonia and Thessaly to calm down Olympias' anger with Antipater. Antipater prepared a powerful poison and sent it to Babylon with his son Kasantros/Kesantros. He and Iulos, a son Antipater and Alexander's cupbearer, hatched a plot with Mesios the Thessalonian to give the poison to Alexander in a drink.

Although the author of the Coptic *Alexander Romance* will probably always be anonymous to us, his text tells a lot about his education and the cultural *milieu* in which he operated. He certainly had some knowledge of Classical Greek culture, as shown in the little episode of Alexander riding Chiron, a centaur endowed with human voice. Fr. 6, conveying the letter and last will of Selpharios, uses words and phrases typical of Coptic testaments of the Late Roman Arab ages, which gives another testimony to the good general education

of the anonymous author of the Coptic *Alexander Romance*.⁷⁰ But his principal point of reference was the *Bible* from which he borrows freely. Most common are Biblical names adopted for the *Alexander Romance*: e.g. the name of the governor in fr. 2, Iôdaê,⁷¹ or the name of the people Alexander dealt with in fr. 1–2, Lamites, probably made after ܠܡܝܬܝܬ (Adulami) or Οδολλαμίτης (sg.) in the Septuagint.⁷² The most obvious example is the garden from which four rivers of sweet water flow: Pison, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates, visited by Alexander (fr. 7), which is simply the Garden of Eden with its four rivers.⁷³ Then there are stock phrases, significant only because the Biblical source of borrowing can be identified: e.g. “ink and paper” (fr. 3),⁷⁴ “with his eyes” (fr. 3),⁷⁵ or “congealed like stone” (fr. 4),⁷⁶ “turn away his eyes” (fr.).⁷⁷ There are also longer Biblical phrases used in the Coptic text: e.g. “If it is thus, the half of my kingdom, take it from me, from to-day” (fr. 3),⁷⁸ and “all that thou asketh of me I shall give thee” (fr. 3),⁷⁹ “the tidings spread over the whole country” (fr. 4).⁸⁰ The list of precious stones in fr. 2 is very similar to the list in *Ez.* 28.17–20. The idea of fasting to lament Alexander’s alleged death proclaimed by Selpharios is Biblical, as is the number of the days of fast: 40;⁸¹ and, indeed we learn from Coptic *ostraca* of a forty-days fasting in Christian Egypt.⁸²

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- 70 Leslie S.B. MacCoull, *Coptic Legal Documents: Law as Vernacular Text and Experience in Late Antique Egypt* (Tempe, Ariz: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2009), 71–77, 88–92, 120–126, 138–140; Leslie S.B. MacCoull, “Aspects of Alexander in Coptic Egypt”, in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson and Ian R. Netton (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2012), 258–259.
- 71 *Ne.* 12.11, 22; 2 *Ki.* 8.18; 4 *Ki.* 11.15, 17, 18, 12.2, 7, 9. Lemm, *Alexanderroman*, 42–43; Maspero, *Popular Stories*, 246.
- 72 *Ge.* 38.1, 12, 20. Lemm, *Alexanderroman*, 97; Maspero, *Popular Stories*, 252.
- 73 *Ge.* 2.11–14.
- 74 2 *Ep.Jo.* 12; the phrase attested also in Greek Christian authors, e.g. Gregorius Nyssenus, *Ep.* 20.21; Epiphaniu, *Ancoratus* 113.1. Lemm, *Alexanderroman*, 50–51; Maspero, *Popular Stories*, 247.
- 75 E.g. 1 *Ep.Jo.* 1.1; *Ev.Matt.* 13.15. Lemm, *Alexanderroman*, 56; Maspero, *Popular Stories*, 247.
- 76 *Ex.* 15.16. Lemm, *Alexanderroman*, 64; Maspero, *Popular Stories*, 248.
- 77 *To.* 3.6; *Ps.* 21.24, 26.9, 29.7; *Ez.* 7.22; *Pr.* 28.27. Lemm, *Alexanderroman*, 93; Maspero, *Popular Stories*, 252.
- 78 *Ev.Marc.* 6.23. Lemm, *Alexanderroman*, 50; Maspero, *Popular Stories*, 247.
- 79 *Ev.Marc.* 6.22; *Ev.Jo.* 14.13. Lemm, *Alexanderroman*, 50; Maspero, *Popular Stories*, 247.
- 80 *Ev.Matt.* 9.26. Lemm, *Alexanderroman*, 64; Maspero, *Popular Stories*, 248.
- 81 Celebrating the dead for 40 days: *Ge.* 50.3. Fasting for 40 days: *Ex.* 34.28; *De.* 9.9; *Ev.Matt.* 4.2; *Ev.Luc.* 4.2. Number 40: *Ex.* 24.18, 34.28; 4 *Ki.* 9.8; *Ev.Marc.* 1.13; *Luc.* 4.2. Lemm, *Alexanderroman*, 78–79; Maspero, *Popular Stories*, 250.
- 82 Walter E. Crum, *Coptic Ostraca from the Collections of the Egypt Exploration Fund, the*

It was noticed long ago that the language of the Coptic *Alexander Romance* contains so many verbal borrowings from Greek, repeating them in Coptic Greek constructions, that it must have resulted from translating directly from Greek.⁸³ The Coptic text is, however, very much unlike any other version of the *Alexander Romance*, since most of the material in fragments 1–6 finds no parallel. Although a very incomplete state of preservation of the Coptic *Alexander Romance* precludes a thorough comparison with Greek versions, certain peculiarities in the surviving fragments point to some meaningful differences and similarities with Greek versions. The story of Alexander's journey through the land of darkness, here in fr. 7, is unknown to the earliest Greek version, ms. A, and surely was not included in the archetype (recension α). It first appears in the fifth-c. β recension (11.38–40), and is usually connected with Alexander's search for water of life.⁸⁴ Since this scene is typical of β -derived versions (λ , ϵ , γ), it seems that, broadly speaking, also the Coptic *Alexander Romance* belongs to the β -branch of the transmission of Ps.-Callisthenes. Some additional clues are provided by fr. 9 which conveys the story of the poisoning of Alexander by Iulios (Iolaos) on the order of Antipater; the story is historically spurious but entrenched throughout the great majority of versions of the *Alexander Romance*. Fr. 9 begins with Alexander's order for Krateros to go with an army to Macedonia and Thessaly. Thessaly, as one of the destinations of Krateros, is unique to β and some β -derivative versions of the *Alexander Romance*. The β -line, however, has the name of Krateros misspelled as *Karteros*, while the Coptic *Alexander Romance* transmits the correct spelling. Unlike the β -line Greek versions, the Coptic *Alexander Romance* knows the name of the son of Antipater dispatched by his father with poison to Babylon and the unsure spelling of the name Kassandros as *Kasantros* (r. 24) or *Kesantros* (vs. 4–5) is not significant. It seems, therefore, that this portion of the Coptic text which follows the line of the Greek *Alexander Romance* was produced as a translation from a good manuscript of the β -line which was free of some later mistakes and omissions which taint the β -line manuscripts surviving to our days. For now the source of most of episodes not derived from the Greek *Alexander Romance* remains unknown.

Cairo Museum and Others: The Texts (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1902), 30; Lemm, *Alexanderroman*, 78–79.

83 See commentary: Lemm, *Alexanderroman*; Maspero, *Popular Stories*, 244.

84 Aleksandra Szalc, "In Search of Water of Life: The Alexander Romance and Indian Mythology", in Richard Stoneman et al. eds., *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2012), 326–338.

Due to the fragmentary state of the Coptic *Alexander Romance* we do not know whether it once contained the story, known from α and other versions, of the begetting of Alexander by Nektanebo II; the episode is deeply set in the Egyptian culture and commonly referred to as the Egyptian *logos*. Selden has, however, identified distinctly Egyptian features in the story of Alexander's adventures in Gedrosia (fragments 3–5).⁸⁵ The local king orders Alexander to be cast into a place called χαωc or χαωcμ, certainly borrowed into Coptic from the Greek word χάσμα (“yawning chasm”),⁸⁶ and translated as “chaos”. This whole idea seems to relate to the Egyptian concept of every pharaoh's duty to protect cosmic order (*maat*) and the world from chaos, or moral and political confusion. In a royal hymn of the New Kingdom Re makes the pharaoh a “master” of humans and the one who pleases gods with promoting *maat* and eliminate confusion (chaos). This idea is implemented here upon Alexander who in fact was never thrown into chaos and was able to promote good order, and as a good pharaoh, could restore the cosmic order of Maat.⁸⁷ Chaos in the Coptic *Alexander Romance* is a chasm or pit deprived of sunlight and bound to kill whoever is thrown into it. This closely resembles the “abyss of destruction” known from the Pyramid Text of Old Kingdom in which a pharaoh flees from it. Dark pits holding culprits before execution appear in the *Amduat* text of the New Kingdom and a number of Egyptian texts contain spells protecting pharaohs from falling into pits of destruction. In the Coptic *Alexander Romance*, Alexander parallels the Sun-god Re who defeats and emerges from the netherworld.⁸⁸ The powerless state of Alexander, taken prisoner by the king of Gedrosia, and his helpless address to the Sun whom he was not to see again brings to mind the Egyptian text *Litany of Re* in which the deceased begs to “come out of the chasm” and to be saved from its killers.⁸⁹

The pronounced position of Alexander in the historical memory, culture and society of Egypt, known best in the case of Alexandria, is attested until the end of the fourth/early fifth c. Apart from the literary evidence discussed above, the most conspicuous features of the reception of Alexander in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt were innumerable statues on display in Alexandria. Stewart lists as many as 22 statues and portraits of Alexander found in Egypt,⁹⁰ not counting reliefs from the Temple of the Barque in Luxor and medallions

85 Selden, “Coptic”, 134–137.

86 LSJ, s.v. χάσμα.

87 Selden, “Coptic”, 137–139.

88 Selden, “Coptic”, 139–140.

89 Selden, “Coptic”, 140.

90 Apart those listed in nn. 92–93, also Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 423 (Azara Alexander version

from Abuqir. He identifies four major iconographic types of statues of Alexander: the equestrian statue of Alexander-*ktistes* from the Tychaion known from literary evidence,⁹¹ nude Fouquet-type Alexanders with two Egyptian examples,⁹² Alexander-Aigiochos with 13 Egyptian examples,⁹³ and another Alexander from the Tychaion.⁹⁴ The iconographic types of portraits of Alexander were adopted in representation of other characters as well.⁹⁵ These about which we know now are surely only a tiny minority of hundreds of statues and other representations of Alexander which were once gracing public spaces and private residences in Alexandria and other cities of Roman Egypt. The statues of Tychaion are last attested ca. AD 400.⁹⁶ The later fate of other representations of Alexander in Egypt is not recorded in our sources, with the exception of one possibly indirect piece of information. If indeed the epigrams of the fifth-c. poet Palladas of Alexandria can be construed as the testimony of the conversion of the Tychaion into a tavern after the pagan cults were abolished,⁹⁷ one may presume that statues of gods and of Alexander once decorating this temple were already removed from it. The only representation of Alexander known to have been produced in Egypt after AD 400 is a widely discussed piece of fabric, probably of the seventh c., with two facing equestrian figures and an inscription in Coptic reading "Alexander of Macedon".⁹⁸ The images, although conforming to the style of the age when they were executed, show at the same time influence of much earlier, early Roman or Hellenistic models,⁹⁹ testifying to the Classical taste of the artist and his audience.

b), 424 (Boston-Capitoline 2; BM 1857; Copenhagen Alexander), 426 (Guimet Alexander), 427 (Magnesia Alexander d), 430 (Stanford Alexander 8).

91 Nikolaos of Myra, ap. Ps.-Lib., *Progymnasmata* 27. Stewart, *Faces*, 243, 247, 397–400.

92 Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 425, nos. 1–2.

93 Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 421–422, nos. 1–4, 7, 8, 10–15, 18.

94 Nikolaos of Myra, ap. Ps.-Lib., *Progymnasmata* 27. Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 243.

95 E.g. Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 425.

96 The date of Nikolaos, Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 383.

97 Palladas, *Anthologia Graeca* IX 180–183. Ine Jacobs, "Temples and Civic Representations in the Theodosian Period," in *Using Images in Late Antiquity* ed. Stine Birk et al. (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), 137.

98 Published e.g.: *Frühchristliche und koptische Kunst. Ausstellung in der Akademie der bildenden Künste, Wien, 11. März bis 3. Mai 1964*. (Vienna: Bundesministerium für Unterricht, 1964), no. 596 and pl. VI. Date: Brune, *Koptische*, 254–255.

99 Karl-Heinz Brune, *Der koptische Reiter: Jäger, König, Heiliger. Ikonographische und stilistische Untersuchung zu den Reiterdarstellungen im spätantiken Ägypten und die Frage ihres "Volkskunstcharakters"* (Altenberge: Oros, 1999), 226–229.

It and the fragmentary Coptic *Alexander Romance* punctuate the silence on Alexander in Greek and Coptic culture of post-Classical Egypt. Chronology alone does not allow for an easy solution for attributing the disappearance of Alexander from the cultural mainstream of Egypt to the Arab conquest. The presence of Alexander-themes in literary works produced in Egypt coincides instead with the age of Classical education widely accessible to and sought after by local elites until at least the end of the fourth c.¹⁰⁰ Once this ceased, Alexander became non-existent in the later Greek culture and quite marginal in the Coptic culture of Egypt.

There are, however, some reference to Alexander in the works of Arabic authors. The earliest and the most important reference is in the *Futūḥ miṣr wa'l maghrab wa'l andalus* (*The Conquest of Egypt and North Africa and Spain*) of Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (803–871). Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam was a scion of a prominent family of early Islamic Egypt, well acquainted with both the Arabic literature and with the local, oral traditions of Egypt.¹⁰¹ In his *Conquest of Egypt*, he names a mosque of al-Khidr or Dhu'l-Qarnayn.¹⁰² The name Dhu'l-Qarnayn (“Two-horned”), known from the Quran (18.83–98, 21.95–96), may be applied both to Alexander, commonly shown in coins with the horns of Ammon,¹⁰³ and to other historical figures.¹⁰⁴ This time, however, the reference is certainly to

100 Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 18–20.

101 Robert Brunschvig, “Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam et la conquête de l'Afrique du Nord par les Arabes”, *Annales de l'Institut d'Etudes Orientales*, 6 (1942–1947): 108–155; Charles C. Torrey, *The History of the Conquest of Egypt, North Africa, and Spain, known as Futūḥ Miṣr of Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), 1–4.

102 Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ miṣr*, p. 41, l. 13 in Torrey's edition, after Philippe Matthey, “Alexandre et le sarcophage de Nectanébo 11: élément de propagande lagide ou mythe savant?”, in *Alexander the Great and Egypt: History, Art, Tradition*, ed. Volker Grieb, Krzysztof Nawotka and Agnieszka Wojciechowska (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 322, n. 32.

103 Coins: Stewart, *Faces of Power*, 231–234, 318–319; Karsten Dahmen, *The Legend of Alexander the Great on Greek and Roman Coins* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 16–17, 36–37. Alexander—Dhu'l-Qarnayn: Andrew R. Anderson, “Alexander's Horns”, *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 58 (1927): 100–122; Earle H. Waugh, “Alexander in Islam: The sacred persona in Muslim rulership adab”, in *Subject and Ruler: The Cult of the Ruling Power in Classical Antiquity: Papers Presented at a Conference held in the University of Alberta on April 13–15, 1994, to Celebrate the 65th anniversary of Duncan Fishwick*, ed. Alastair Small (Ann Arbor: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1996), 237–253; Peter Bachmann, “Der mit den zwei Hörnern”. *Alexander der Grosse in Werken der arabischen Literatur* (Mainz am Rhein: Von Zabern, 2005), 1–18.

104 Emily Cottrell, “An Early Mirror for Princes and Manual for Secretaries: *The Epistolary*

Alexander, for two reasons. The first is the alternative name of the mosque, al-Khidr, after a minor figure in the Quran and Alexander's companion and cook in some versions of the *Alexander Romance*. The second, more important reason is that, in the *Futūḥ miṣr*, Dhu'l-Qarnayn is a Greek who founded Alexandria, and this can only be Alexander.¹⁰⁵ Another Arabic writer working in Egypt, Mas'ūdī, claims that the tomb of Alexander could be seen in his days (AD 943) in Alexandria.¹⁰⁶ These pieces of evidence and later accounts of early modern travellers, like Leo Africanus, have been variously used to identify the place where the tomb of Alexander once stood, but to no ultimate avail.¹⁰⁷ This does not, however, deny the value of the Arabic historians as a source on the issue of the survival of the memory of Alexander in medieval Egypt. These accounts, no matter how accurate otherwise in depicting the historical reality of Alexandria, prove that at least some Arabic writers active in Medieval Egypt had some knowledge of Alexander and deemed it worthy of inclusion in their books. Thus a thin thread of memory of Alexander can be traced among the educated Coptic and Islamic elites of Medieval Egypt. The evidence we have does not allow us to go any further in speculating whether there was a living memory about the founder of Alexandria among its broader population in the Middle Ages and early modern times.¹⁰⁸

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105 Matthey, "Alexandre", 322–323.

106 'Alī b. al Ḥusain Mas'ūdī, *Les prairies d'or*, texte et tr. par C. Barbier de Meynard et Pavet de Courteille, II, Paris 1863, 259.

107 Matthey, "Alexandre", 322–326.

108 See a sober assessment of Matthey ("Alexandre") of the story of the sarcophagus of Nectanebo II in the Attarine mosque in Alexandria allegedly believed by the local population as the sarcophagus of Alexander. Matthey shows that this most likely is scholarly legend.

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Byzantine Views on Alexander the Great

Corinne Jouanno

The presence in the “Bible” of all Byzantinists, the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, of an entry devoted to “Alexander the Great”¹ is a good indicator of the important place occupied by the Macedonian Conqueror in Byzantine political imagery. This special place is to a large extent a result of the omnipresence of Alexander in Graeco-Roman *paideia*,² and that is why the present paper will begin with a survey of the ancient material available in Byzantium, as it offers the starting point for the elaboration of a Byzantine image of Alexander. The two next parts of the article will deal with Alexander’s presence in proper Byzantine texts, either under the guise of allusions and anecdotes, or in works and chapters of works specially devoted to the story of his life, so as to bring to the fore the main reasons of the Byzantines’ interest in the Macedonian king, to observe the inherited elements and the new trends characteristic of his medieval image, and to determine to what extent the Byzantines appropriated a historical figure who was a pillar in the cultural memory of the ancient world.

Ancient Sources on Alexander in Byzantium

Historical Sources

The texts of the three extant historians of Alexander, book xvii of Diodorus of Sicily’s *Library of History*, Plutarch’s *Life of Alexander*, and Arrian’s *Anabasis* were well known to learned Byzantine readers, and are often referred to, quoted, and/or imitated,³ but Plutarch seems to have been by far the most appreciated of the three, perhaps because the biographical nature of his work was more appealing to the Byzantines, much alive to the personal dimension of political power, and perhaps also, as suggested by Anthony Kaldellis, because

1 Article written by Elisabeth M. Jeffreys and Anthony Cutler (*ODB*, I, 59).

2 Laurent Pernot, *Alexandre le Grand. Les risques du pouvoir. Textes philosophiques et rhétoriques* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2013), ix–xi.

3 For a more detailed investigation on the subject, see Corinne Jouanno, “The Alexander Historians in Byzantium”, *Classica et Orientalia 7: Historiography of Alexander the Great in Wrocław (8–11 October 2014)* (forthcoming).

the *Lives* “had a competitive advantage in the Byzantine context over general histories, which was that they could serve as models for the genre of imperial biography”.⁴ Palaeographic evidence indicates that Plutarch’s *Life of Alexander* must have been circulating more intensively than the two other works: it was copied many times, without interruption, from the 10th to the 16th century;⁵ on the reverse, only one of the 40 or so manuscripts containing Arrian’s *Anabasis* is relatively old (the *Vind. Hist. gr.* 4, copied towards the end of the 11th c.), while the other manuscripts date from the 13th or 14th century (10 mss), 15th, 16th or even 17th century. As for Diodorus, only 17 of the 59 manuscripts of the *Library of History* include Book XVII, one of whom was copied in the 10th century and the others in the 15th or 16th century: to judge from the testimony of the world chronicles, it seems the Byzantines appreciated Diodorus as a mythographer and an historian of the Roman world more than as an historian of Classical Greece.

Ethical and Anecdotal Material

Besides historical works a lot of other ancient texts contributed to the construction of the Byzantine image of Alexander, and provided Byzantine authors with an abundant repertoire of anecdotes on the Macedonian king. Most influential were Plutarch’s ethical writings and Dio Chrysostom’s treatises *On Kingship*.

Alexander is indeed much present in Plutarch’s *Moralia*: outside the two essays *De Alexandri fortuna*, he features in the *Apophthegms of kings and generals*, where he is credited with 34 apophthegms, thus coming first in the volume, before his father Philip (32 sayings) and Cato (29 sayings), and he also appears as the protagonist of a series of anecdotes dispatched throughout 35 other *Moralia*, for instance in the essay *How to discern a flatterer and a friend*, where he is mentioned no less than seven times. Since Plutarch’s reputation in Byzantium was first and foremost that of a moralist,⁶ his ethical views on Alexander were even more widely diffused than his biography of the Macedonian king: as a matter of fact, the manuscripts containing the *De Alexandri fortuna* (around 45) outnumber that of the *Life of Alexander* (around 35).

4 Anthony Kaldellis, “The Byzantine Role in the Making of the Corpus of Classical Historiography: A Preliminary Investigation”, *JHS* 132 (2012), 86–87.

5 Five manuscripts have been copied in the 10th or 11th century: *Par. gr.* 1678; *Laur. conv. soppr.* 206; *Pal. Heidelb. gr.* 168 and 169; *Marc. app. gr. cl.* IV, 55; *Athos Lavra* Γ 84 + *Paris. suppl. gr.* 686 (which are parts of one and the same volume).

6 See Antonio Garzya, “Plutarco a Bisanzio”, in *L’Eredità culturale di Plutarco dall’ antichità al Rinascimento. Atti del VII Convegno plutarco*, ed. Italo Gallo (Naples: M. D’Auria, 1998), 39–

Dio Chrysostom too ranged among the favourite political thinkers of the Byzantines:⁷ Synesios, in the monography he devoted to this author, labelled him an “exceptional” orator and philosopher (4, 1: περιττός ἀνὴρ εἰπεῖν τε καὶ γνῶναι). Placed at the head of Dio’s corpus, the discourses *On Kingship* were considered as his chef d’œuvre⁸ and as a reference book on the question of imperial power. Alexander plays a prominent role in three of these four speeches: he is the main character of the second and fourth orations, where he appears in dialogue with Philip (n° 2) and Diogenes (n° 4), and he features in the prologue of the oration n° 1, which opens with an anecdote about his being incited to fight by the music of Timotheos the flautist. Dio’s popularity certainly explains why references to Alexander and Timotheos recur so often in Byzantine writings.⁹

Though Lucian’s fame was more controversial because of his reputation as an atheist,¹⁰ he was much appreciated for his stylistic qualities (see Photius’ laudatory comment in cod. 128 of his *Library*), and examples of his influence on Byzantine *belles lettres* are plentiful from the 10th century onwards.¹¹ His works too were extremely rich in references to Alexander, mentioned in about ¼ of the 80 *opuscula* forming the Lucianic corpus:¹² the Macedonian king is even the subject of an *ekphrasis* in *Herodotos*, which describes a painting by Aetion of his weddings with Roxane, and he appears as a protagonist in three *Dialogues of the Deads* (n° 12, with Philip; n° 13, with Diogenes; n° 25, with Hannibal, Minos, and Scipio)—that is works which were both imitated in Byzantium, the

7 Cf. Aldo Brancacci, *Rhetorike philosophousa. Dione Crisostomo nella cultura antica e bizantina* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1985), 199–313 (from Photius to Metochites).

8 Cf. Mariella Menchelli, *Studi sulla storia della tradizione manoscritta dei Discorsi I–IV di Dione di Prusa* (Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore, 2008), 257–259. In her Appendix (271–304), Menchelli offers a description of 41 manuscripts, ranging from the 9th/10th to the 16th century.

9 Cf. Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, Prol. 4, 1; 9, 5, 1; Niketas Choniates, *Or.* 7, ed. van Dieten, 54 and *Or.* 14, ed. van Dieten, 130. Further references in Corinne Jouanno, “Fortune d’une anecdote de Dion Chrysostome: Alexandre et le flûtiste Timothée (*Or.* 1, 1)”, in *Phileuripidès. Mélanges offerts à François Jouan*, ed. Danièle Auger and Jocelyne Peigney (Nanterre: Presses universitaires de Paris 10, 2008), 725–740.

10 Cf. Mark J. Edwards, “Lucian of Samosata in the Christian Memory”, *Byzantion* 80 (2010), 142–156.

11 Cf. Christopher Robinson, *Lucian and his influence in Europe* (London: Duckworth, 1979), 68–81.

12 Cf. Jacques Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain. Imitation et création* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1958), 163–165.

first one by Manganeios Prodromos (12th c.) and Manuel Philes (13th/14th c.),¹³ and the second by the author of a three-characters dialogue, preserved in the codex *Ambrosianus gr.* 655 and probably composed in the age of Palaeologan Renaissance: confronted with Charon and Hermes, Alexander in this text is depicted as a braggart, a rough and despotic ruler, devoured by an insatiable ambition.¹⁴ The Byzantine author is thus following in the footsteps of Lucian, whose critical view of Alexander was in sharp contrast with the predominantly laudatory picture to be found in Diodorus, Plutarch, Arrian, and even Dio, and contributed to the transmission of Alexander's "black legend" in Byzantium.

It is probable that Aelian too provided material to the Byzantine "black legend", for he shares with Lucian a rather negative view of Alexander:¹⁵ the 34 anecdotes related to the Macedonian king in his *Miscellaneous Stories* put to the fore various unpleasant aspects of his personality, his quick temper, expensive tastes, drunkenness and, most of all, his pretention to divine filiation, repeatedly mocked by Aelian. Though less diffused than Lucian's work, the *Miscellaneous Stories* were familiar to at least some learned Byzantines,¹⁶ and

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- 13 Manganeios Prodromos, *Or.* 4 (a. 1052/1053), l. 578–602, comparing the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Comnenos with Alexander (ed. E. Miller, *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Historiens grecs*, 11, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1881, 744–745); Manuel Philes, *Μεταφραστικοί από τίνος τῶν τοῦ Λουκιανοῦ λόγων εἰς εἰκόνα ἐξωγραφημένον τὸν τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου γάμον* (ed. E. Miller, *Manuelis Philae Carmina*, vol. 1–2, Paris: Typogr. imp., 1855–1857, ch. 5, Poem 3). On Philes's description, see Robinson, *Lucian*, 69.
 - 14 Cf. O. Karsay, "Eine byzantinische Imitation von Lukianos", *AAntHung* 19 (1971), 383–391. Conversely, the Lucianic works that can be read as parodies of Alexander's journey up to the end of the world, *Alexander the false prophet*, the *True Stories* and *The Ship*, where Samippos' dream is inspired by Alexander's Oriental expedition (cf. Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain*, 618–621), do not seem to have exerted any kind of influence in Byzantium, as far as Alexander is concerned.
 - 15 Cf. Wouter F.M. Henkelman, in Dominique Lenfant (dir.), *Les Perses vus par les Grecs. Lire les sources classiques sur l'empire achéménide* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011), 159–184 (174 on Alexander); Luisa Prandi, *Memorie storiche dei Greci in Claudio Eliano* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2005) 81–90 and 175–176 (on Aelian's relation to Lucian). The memory of Caracalla's excesses may explain the prevalence of a negative view of Alexander in Aelian.
 - 16 Mervin R. Dilts quotes testimonia found in Stobaeus, Stephanus Byzantinus, Arethas, the *Suda*, Tzetzes and Eustathios of Thessalonike, and he also points to the existence of several collections of *excerpta* dating from the late 13th to the 15th century ("The testimonia of Aelian's *Variae Historiae*", *Manuscripta* 15 (1971), 3–12). Barry Baldwin mentions the presence of a lengthy paraphrase of the account of Alexander's victory banquet (Aelian, *vh*, 8, 7) in Theoktistos the Studite's *Logos on the relics of the patriarch Athanasios of Constantinople* (first half of the 14th c.): "A New Byzantine Allusion to Aelian's *Varia Historia*", *Maia* 36 (1984), 169.

probably inspired Niketas Choniates' critical remarks on Alexander's lavishness, his becoming unapproachable and claiming to divine honours from the Greek people.¹⁷ Inserted into an imperial oration addressed to Isaac II Angelos (1185–1195 and 1203–1204), this unflattering portrait of the Macedonian king serves as a foil to the Byzantine emperor: Choniates is thus exploiting a method highly recommended by the theoreticians of rhetoric.

Technical Corpora: Technai Rhetorikai and Military Treatises

Alexander had indeed found his place at every level of the rhetorical *cursus*: he is mentioned in theoretical treatises¹⁸ and more practical handbooks of *progymnasmata* ("preliminary exercises"),¹⁹ and his history also provided various subjects of declamation.²⁰ Theon's reference, in his chapter on *chreia*, to Alexander pointing to his friends as his most precious treasure²¹ seems to have been particularly influential, if we judge from the frequency of this anecdote in all kinds of Byzantine texts, letters, orations, mirrors for princes and

17 Or. 9, ed. van Dieten, 96: cf. Aelian, *VH*, 9, 3 (luxury, inaccessibility), 2, 19 and 5, 12 (letter addressed to the Athenians to require divine honours).

18 See Demetrios, *On style*, 187 and 283–284 (quotations from Demades, fr. 53, 12 and 15 De Falco); Ps.-Aristides, *Art of Rhetoric*, 1, 122 (quotation from Demosthenes, *On the Crown*, 52) and 162 (reference to Alexander in a development concerning praise by omission); Hermogenes, *On Issues*, 1, 6; *On Forms*, 11, 7, 15 (quotation from Demosthenes, *On the Crown*, 51); *On Invention*, 3, 15; Apsines, *Art of Rhetoric*, 1, 61; 2, 6 and 9; 10, 21; *On Figured problems*, 8; Menander Rhetor, ed. Russell and Wilson, 1 (*Division of Epideictic Speeches*), 56–57, on city praise (2 ref.); 11 (*On Epideictic Speeches*), 92–93, on imperial oration (*basilikos logos*); 112–115, on speech of arrival (*epibatêrios*); 186–187, on speech of invitation (*klêtikos*); 444, on *Smyrniakos*.

19 Theon (1st c.), *Prog.*, ch. 3 (*chreia*: 4 ex.), ch. 6 (*topos*: quotation from Demosthenes, *On the Crown*, 296), ch. 9 (*encomion* and invective: 1 ex.); Libanios (4th c.), *Prog.*, ch. 3 (*chreia*); Nicolaus the Sophist (5th c.), *Prog.*, ch. 3 (*chreia*), ed. Felten, 21; John of Sardis (early 9th c.), *Comm. in Aphthonium*, ch. 3 (*chreia*) and 8 (*encomion*), ed. Rabe, 39, 40, 41, 42, 48, 50, 130, 138; Doxapater (2nd half of the 11th c.), *Homiliae in Aphthonium*, ch. 3 (*chreia*), ed. Walz, *Rhetores graeci*, 11, 83–84; Xanthopulos (before 1256–ca. 1335), *Prog.*, ch. 3 (*chreia*), ed. Joseph Glettner, "Die *Progymnasmata* des Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopulos. Erstausgabe", *BZ* 33 (1933), 10. On Theon's Byzantine reception, cf. George Kennedy, *Progymnasmata. Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 2; Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O'Neil, *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric. Classroom Exercises* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 98–112 (John of Sardis), 140–155 (Libanios), 249–253 (Doxapater), 357–359 (Xanthopulos).

20 Pernot, *Alexandre le Grand. Les risques du pouvoir*, 133–159.

21 The same anecdote features in John of Sardis', Libanios' and Doxapater's chapters on *chreia*.

gnomologies.²² But the most seminal text was definitely Menander Rhetor's treatise *On Epideictic Speeches* (3rd c.), whose chapter on *basilikos logos* exerted a lasting influence on Byzantine authors of imperial panegyrics of all periods.²³ Menander recommended to conclude a ruler's encomion with a "complete comparison, examining his reign in comparison with preceding reigns, not disparaging them (that is bad craftsmanship), but admiring them while granting perfection to the present": as an example he quoted the comparison of "the reign of Alexander with the present one".²⁴ Afterwards, Menander's chapter was incorporated into the *Rhetorica Marciana*,²⁵ a late-12th or early-13th-century rhetorical treatise then partially reproduced in the *Synopsis of Rhetoric* of Joseph Rhakendytes (ca. 1280–ca. 1330), a prominent representative of Byzantine intelligentsia under the reign of Andronikos II Palaeologos (1282–1328).²⁶ We find again the same reference to Alexander in the "*protheoria*" written by John Chortasmenos (ca. 1370–1436/1437) as a prologue to his *Oration to Manuel II Palaeologus Returning from Thessalonike*.²⁷ after defining his work both as a panegyric and a *prosphōnetikos*, he refers to Hermogenes' theory of forms (his association of *panegyrikos logos* with λαμπρότης, ἀκμή and περιβολή) and, mixing recollection of Menander with Hermogenian doctrine, indicates that "brilliance" can be produced by the introduction of historical examples, such as Alexander, actually mentioned at the end of his own imperial oration.

Unsurprisingly, Alexander is also given pride of place in another kind of technical writings much influential in Byzantium, that of military treatises. Addressed as a *vademecum* to Marcus Aurelius and his foster brother Lucius

22 Cf. Libanios, *Or.* 8, 8–9; Themistios, *Or.* 16, 203c; Gregory of Nyssa, *Ep.* 8, 4; Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 111, 236 (PG 78, 917A); Eustathios of Thessalonike, *Ep.* 32 (ed. Kolovou); Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Basilikos Andrias*, § 75 (ed. Hunger and Sevcenko); Thomas Magister, *De regis officiis*, ch. 16 (ed. Volpe Cacciatore); Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ep.* 29, 48–55 and 85, 33–35 (ed. Leone); *Gnomologium Vaticanum*, 86; *Loci communes*, 6, 137.

23 See the short but suggestive entry on "Menander Rhetor", by Elisabeth M. Jeffreys and Nigel G. Wilson, in *ODB*, 11, 1338–1339.

24 Menander Rhetor, 11, ed. Russell and Wilson, 92–93.

25 On this text, see Vittorio de Falco, "Trattato retorico bizantino (*Rhetorica Marciana*)", *Atti della società liguistica di scienze e lettere di Genova*, n.s. 9, fasc. 2 (1930), 71–124. The treatise is dated from the 12th c. by Kock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 258–261, and from the early 13th c. by Dimitar Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 53, n. 80.

26 Ed. Walz, *Rhetores graeci*, 111, 557.

27 Herbert Hunger (ed.), *Johannes Chortasmenos* (ca. 1370–ca. 1436/37). *Briefe, Gedichte und kleine Schriften: Einleitung, Regesten, Prosopographie, Text* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1969), 225–226.

Verus, about to launch an expedition against the Parthians (ca. 162), Polyaeus' *Stratagems of war* are quoted by Constantine Porphyrogenitus among the "historical works" an emperor is duty bound to bring with him when embarking on a military campaign.²⁸ In this work considered by the Byzantine emperor as a reference book on military art, a chapter rich in 32 *exempla* is devoted to Alexander (IV, 3), who thus comes fourth after Iphicrates (63 ex.), Agesilaus and Caesar (33 ex.).²⁹ The anecdotes concerning Alexander put to the fore two main qualities of the Macedonian king, his leadership and great ingenuity.³⁰ He is skilled in winning his soldiers' affection so as to get the most from them, ready to set a good example in order to galvanize his troops into action, and does not hesitate to manipulate opinion, to prevent his men from surrendering to discouragement or even waves of panic. As a matter of fact, he tricks his own soldiers as well as the enemies, so that most of his victories are won through crafty stratagems that allow him to get the upper hand over adversaries much more numerous than his own troops—a peculiarity we also find in the *Alexander Romance*, last but not least of the ancient sources dealing with the life of the Macedonian conqueror.

Alexander Romance

Parallel to Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*, another biography of the Macedonian king had taken form in Antiquity, the *Alexander Romance*, falsely attributed to Alexander's official historian Callisthenes. Because of its loose form and somewhat dubious aesthetic qualities, it features at the margins of the literary scene, though it enjoyed an extraordinary popularity throughout the Middle Ages. The date of its emergence has been much discussed, and is difficult to determine with any certainty, for the work, in its present form, is composed of heterogeneous material, some pieces of which (for instance, the novella presenting

28 *Cer.*, ed. Reisk, I, 467. On Polyaeus' textual reception, see Friedel Schindler, *Die Überlieferung der Strategemata des Polyainos* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1973). All the manuscripts listed by Schindler date from the 15th, 16th, or 17th c., but the presence of *excerpta* in earlier codices (e.g. in *Vat. gr.* 305, late 13th–early 14th c.) attests to the circulation of Polyaeus' text in Byzantine times.

29 Cf. Nicholas G.L. Hammond, "Some Passages in Polyaeus' *Stratagems* concerning Alexander", *GRBS* 37 (1996), 23–53; Christine Maisonneuve, in Lenfant, *Les Perses vus par les Grecs*, 339–355 (345–346 on Alexander).

30 There is something of a parochial bias in this very flattering portrait of Alexander as an invincible warrior: being himself a Macedonian, Polyaeus considered Alexander as his national hero, and felt an evident satisfaction at holding him up as an example to the rulers of the Roman Empire: cf. Jonas Palm, *Rom, Römertum und Imperium in der griechischen Literatur der Kaiserzeit* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1959), 62–63.

Alexander as pharaoh Nectanebo's son, Alexander's letter to Aristotle on the marvels of the East, the account of his death by poisoning, or his Last Will) go back to the very beginning of the Ptolemaic period and must have been circulating independently before being put together at the end of the Hellenistic times, or in the imperial age, to form the text we call the *Alexander Romance*.³¹ Known as the *alpha* (α) recension, the first extant version of this fictional biography, mingling inextricably aspects of the historical tradition with invented episodes of a very imaginative kind, has been transmitted to us in a single Greek manuscript, dating from the 11th century (*Parisinus gr.* 1711), but it would be false to conclude that it enjoyed only a limited diffusion in Medieval Greece and was soon replaced by new Byzantine rewritings (see below), while it was translated into Latin and Armenian already in the 4th and 5th centuries. Other pieces of evidence tend to prove that the scarcity of the manuscript tradition is misleading, and that the α recension continued to be read and appreciated throughout the Byzantine period:³² it is this very text that is quoted or alluded to in John Malalas' chronicle (6th c.), in the apocryphal *Letter of the Three Oriental Patriarchs to the Emperor Theophilus* (9th c.), in an *ethopoia* of Nikephoros Basilakes (1115–ca. 1180),³³ in several poems of Tzetzes' *Chiliades*³⁴ (after 1110–after 1180/85), and it was also used as a primary source in the Late Byzantine *Poem of Alexander* of codex *Marcianus gr.* 408 (14 th c. ?).³⁵

31 See Stoneman's review of the various arguments, in Richard Stoneman and Tristano Gargiulo, *Il Romanzo di Alessandro*, vol. 1 (Rome: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla—A. Mondadori, 2007), XXV–XXXIV.

32 Cf. Corinne Jouanno, "La réception du *Roman d'Alexandre* à Byzance", *Ancient Narrative. Volume 1* (2000–2001) (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing & The University Library Groningen, 2002), 311 (n. 47), 312–313, 316–317, 320–321.

33 *Niceforo Basilace. Progimnasmī e monodie*, ed. Adriana Pignani (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1983), n. 24: "What would say the flautist Ismenias, forced by Alexander to play his instrument during the destruction of Thebes?"

34 *Chil.* 1, 13 ("Amphion"); 7, 139 ("About Thebes, destroyed by Alexander, and then reconstructed by Alexander himself because of an athlete"); 10, 332 ("Where it is told of the <corn> ear with a golden helm grown anew by Thebes, after welcoming you, the second Ismenos").

35 Cf. Willem J. Aerts, "The Ismenias passage in the *Byzantine Alexander Poem*", in *Fictional Traces: Reception of the Ancient Novel*, ed. Marília P. Futre Pinheiro and Stephen J. Harrison (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing—Groningen University Library, 2011), vol. 1, 69–82.

Byzantine Writing on Alexander (1): Allusions and Anecdotes

Epistolography and Imperial Orations

Alexander's presence, in the form of punctual reference or more developed *exempla*, is conspicuous in Byzantine letters and orations, two literary genres particularly productive in Byzantium. I will pass briefly over epistolography, where allusions to Alexander are often of an ornamental kind. Because they allowed the epistolographer to display his erudition and rhetorical dexterity, such references were part of an intellectual game aimed to create a relation of connivance between writer and addressee, and Byzantine authors used them as a sign of recognition between *literati*—an epideictic function all the more significant since Byzantine letters were not mere private documents, but were often destined to be read publicly in front of literary circles (*theatra*).³⁶ Conversely, when featuring in imperial orations, allusions to Alexander are no longer mechanical displays of learning, even if the comparison of the *laudandus* with the Macedonian king featured among the *topoi* the use of which was recommended for a *basilikos logos*. Though almost all the Byzantine emperors have been successively compared with Alexander, the frequency of comparisons varies importantly according to historical circumstances.

In the 7th century the typology of Heraclius (610–641) Alexander was much exploited, because of Heraclius' campaigns against the Persians, and the name of the Macedonian king appears recurrently in the poems composed by the official panegyrist of the emperor, George Pisides, to celebrate his victories over Khushraw.³⁷ Basil the First (867–886), founder of the Macedonian dynasty, was also often compared with Alexander by his biographers and encomiasts, who inform us that he claimed he was descended from the Macedonian conqueror:³⁸ being of humble origin and risen to the throne by assassinating Michael III, Basil probably invented this fictitious genealogy in order to legit-

36 Cf. Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge—New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 339: *theatra* “combined the functions of examination, interview, lecturing, entertainment, literary publication”.

37 Cf. *Exp. Persica*, III, 41–49; *Heraclius*, 110–130. On the importance of the Alexander-Heraclius typology in this age of ideological crisis due to the emergence of Islam, see Gerrit J. Reinink, “Heraclius, the new Alexander. Apocalyptic Prophecies during the Reign of Heraclius”, in *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641): Crisis and confrontation*, ed. Gerrit J. Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 81–94.

38 Genesios, 4, 24; Theoph. Cont., v, 3 (ed. Bekker, 216). Basil even named one of his sons Alexander, “a name totally unusual at the time”, according to Andreas Schminck, “The Beginnings and Origins of the ‘Macedonian’ Dynasty”, in *Byzantine Macedonia: Identity,*

imize his irregular seizure of power.³⁹ But it was under the Comnenian dynasty that the exploitation of the Alexander paradigm reached its peak. Literary and political reasons contribute to explain the popularity of Alexander references toward the middle of the 12th century. The Comnenian period was a time of cultural renewal, marked by a sustained interest in Ancient Greek literature (authors of the Second Sophistic were particularly appreciated by 12th-century *literati*, hence the proliferation of borrowings from/echoes of Lucian's works in the rhetorical production of the time). Otherwise Basil I was a figure of reference for the Comnenian rulers, eager to restore the past greatness of the Empire: they might have found it convenient to imitate Basil's exploitation of the Alexander paradigm, particularly appropriate to warrior emperors. As a matter of fact, the Comnenian emperors adopted an aggressive policy towards the Eastern countries and developed a military ideology for which Alexander could serve as a symbol or an alibi.

The two orations composed in 1138 by Michael Italikos and Nikephoros Basilakes to celebrate John II Comnenos' victorious campaign in Syria and Cilicia offer a striking example of the "Alexandromania" pervasive in mid-12th century official rhetoric. Both men ranked among the most famous professors of the time, and were colleagues at the school of Saint Sophia in Constantinople.⁴⁰ Italikos' oration was probably composed after and in reaction to Basilakes' performance.⁴¹ The two texts offer a rich supply of references to Alexander: Italikos' discourse comprises six explicit mentions of the Conqueror and a generic allusion to the successes of the Macedonians (τὰ Μακεδόνων), and Basilakes' text contains no less than fifteen Alexander references.⁴² While Italikos follows

Image and History. Papers from the Melbourne Conference, July 1995, ed. John Burke and Roger Scott (Melbourne: Australian Catholic University, 2000), 65–68; cf. Niketas David Paphlagon, *Vita Ignatii*, PG 105, col. 565D.

39 Cf. Gyula Moravcsik, "Sagen und Legenden über Kaiser Basileios I", *DOP* 15 (1961), 59–126.

40 Italikos, who taught rhetoric and philosophy, was "Teacher of the Gospels" (διδάσκαλος τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου), and Basilakes "Teacher of the Epistles" (διδάσκαλος τοῦ Ἀποστόλου): cf. Bernard Flusin, "L'enseignement et la culture écrite", in *Le Monde byzantin. Tome 2. L'Empire byzantin (641–1204)*, dir. Jean-Claude Cheynet (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2006), 365. According to Antonio Garzya, professors at Saint Sophia were usually destined to practise court oratory and to pronounce elaborated panegyrics supporting the official ideology ("Un lettré du milieu du XI^e siècle: Nicéphore Basilakès", *RESE* 8 (1970), 611–621).

41 Cf. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I*, 432.

42 Michael Italikos, *Basilikos logos to the porphyrogenitus and autokrator John Comnenos on his fights in Syria*, ed. Paul Gautier, *Michel Italikos. Lettres et discours* (Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1972), 247, 251, 257, 259, 264 (2 occ.); Nikephoros Basilakes,

a standard pattern and alludes to episodes well attested in Alexander historians (battles at Issos and Maracanda, role of Alexander at Chaeroneia, generosity of the king towards his enemy Poros), Basilakes, not content with exploiting material available in “classical” sources⁴³ (which were the normal repertoire of Byzantine *literati*), also makes a lengthy allusion to an episode of the *Alexander Romance*, the story of the three presents sent by Darius to Alexander with the intent of insulting him, and reinterpreted by the young king as a presage of victory (*AR*, 1, 36 and 38). To Darius’ gifts Basilakes compares the rich tribute offered by the emir Abul Asakis to John II Comnenos: the presence of a cross among the emir’s gifts is supposed to foretell the Byzantine emperor’s domination on the *oikoumene* and his proclamation of the Christ’s kingship all over the world. One must point out the boldness of a reference to a literary work of such a low standard as the *Alexander Romance* in the very heart of an imperial oration that is a speech declaimed in the most solemn circumstances.⁴⁴ Moreover, by denigrating Alexander, Basilakes also flouts the precepts of Menander Rhetor (who declared such a process “artless”), evidently with the intention of proclaiming the superiority of the Byzantine, Christian emperor over a pagan king.⁴⁵ He thus at one and the same time exploits all the potentialities and exposes the limits of the Alexander paradigm.

Infatuation for Alexander persisted in the following centuries, during the period of the exiled Empire (in panegyrics composed for emperors of Trebizond and Nicea) and after the reconquest of Constantinople.⁴⁶ Comparisons between Alexander and Michael VIII Palaeologus (1261–1282), who recovered

In Ioannem Comnenum imperatorem oratio, § 6 (2 occ.), 7 (2 occ.), 9, 15, 21, 27 (2 occ.), 32 (3 occ.), 38 (ed. Riccardo Maisano, *Niceforo Basilace. Gli encomi per l'imperatore e per il patriarca*, Naples: Università di Napoli, Cattedra di Filologia Bizantina, 1977).

43 Several of Basilakes’ allusions seem inspired by Plutarch’s *Life of Alexander* (Alexander’s generosity towards Darius’ daughter, cf. *VA*, 21; Alexander suspected by Darius of cowardice, cf. *VA*, 19, 1; Alexander’s generosity towards Poros, cf. *VA*, 60; Crateros’ support to Alexander, cf. *VA*, 40–42).

44 Cf. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I*, 352: “Imperial encomium was delivered either in palace throne rooms or, in the case of ‘popular’ acclamations, in courtyards and public places.”

45 On Basilakes’ reputation of / and pretence to originality, see Garzya, “Un lettré du milieu du XII^e siècle”.

46 Cf. Nicolette Sophia Trahoulia, *The Venice Alexander Romance, Hellenic Institute Codex gr. 5: A Study of Alexander the Great as an Imperial Paradigm in Byzantine Art and Literature* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1999), 40–49 and 56–59; Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 85–97, with a table of comparative figures in imperial panegyrics, from Theodore I Laskaris up to Andronikos II Palaeologus.

Constantinople from the hands of the Latins, are very frequent, as we can judge from the discourses of Manuel Holobolos, official panegyrist of the emperor: just as the Comnenian emperors, admirers of Basil I, appropriated his Alexander-friendly stance, Michael VIII, who longed to restore the grandeur of the Comnenian Empire, revived in his turn the Comnenian emperors' "*zélōs Alexandreios*".⁴⁷ Later on, the ever stronger pressure of the Turkish threat contributed to the topicality of the Alexander paradigm, whose exploitation took on even more nationalist undertones. In the last years of the Byzantine Empire, references to Alexander tend to lose their encomiastic quality and rather serve as patriotic exhortation. In the oration he addressed to Constantine XI Palaeologus before his rise to the throne in 1449, only a few years before the fall of Constantinople, Bessarion urged the future emperor to remember Alexander's fate, his humble start and meteoric ascension, and consider it as a motif of comfort and hope for the salvation of the Empire.⁴⁸

Military Treatises

Because he was a warrior king, Alexander is more present in military treatises than in mirrors for princes, which usually developed a peaceful ideal of rulership. But even in works dealing with the art of strategy, little is said of his bravery, and he is quoted first and foremost as a model of ability in getting the best of his troops or cleverness in deceiving the enemies. Most Byzantine handbooks are indeed heavily dependent on Polyænus' *Stratagems of War*, which was not only read as a reference book, but also several times rewritten: Alphonse Dain mentions the existence of five successive adaptations of the *Strategemata*, probably composed between the 9th and 11th century, the *Hypotheseis*, the *Strategemata Ambrosiana*, the *Parecholae*, the *Syllogê Tacticorum*, and the *Tactica* by Nikephoros Ouranos.⁴⁹ The main innovation of the *Hypotheseis*, followed by the four other adaptations, is to have reorganized Polyænus' material into chapters arranged thematically so that Alexander *exempla* have been dispatched under various headings.⁵⁰ Such a splitting up of the Alexander

47 This expression is used by Italikos in his oration to John Comnenos (ed. Gautier, 264).

48 Ed. Spyridon P. Lampros, *Palaiologeia kai Peloponnēsiaka*, vol. 4 (Athens: *Epitropē ekdoseōs tōn katalogōn Spyridōnos Lamprou*, 1930), 37.

49 Alphonse Dain, "Les cinq adaptations byzantines des 'Stratagèmes' de Polyen", *REA* 33 (1931), 321–345. See also Schindler, *Die Überlieferung der Strategemata des Polyainos*, 205–225.

50 Anecdotes about the Macedonian king appear in the thirteen following rubrics: "What sort of man a general must be", "On military training and temperance", "How to propitiate enemies", "Testing of friends", "How to make new enemies for enemies", "On battle

material contributes to build up the image of a king ready to face victoriously in every circumstance of war: the new arrangement chosen by the Byzantine authors strengthens his exemplary stature as a strategist, and this impression is still reinforced by the suppression of many proper names and geographical particulars of the original text, which thus takes on a more general significance. It is therefore no wonder that the emperor Leo VI (886–912), in the 20th “Constitution” of his *Tactica*, quotes Alexander as a model of generalship, on a par with the Roman Scipio and the Jewish Phinees.⁵¹ Similarly, Alexander is cited as an example to imitate in the opening chapter of the *Syllogê Tacticorum*: there he is coupled with Cyrus and Caesar, and praised, along with Cyrus, for his “tactical experience and ingenuity”.⁵²

Gnomologies

Alexander also occupies a notable place in Byzantine gnomologies, a genre highly appreciated in Byzantium at all levels of society, if we are to believe Michael Psellos, who quotes “Lacedaemonian apophthegms and collections of maxims (γνωμολογίαι)” among Michael VII Doukas’ favourite readings (*Chron.* 7c, 4). The production of *florilegia* was so abundant in Byzantium, especially between the 8th and 12th century (their “golden age”, to quote Marcel Richard⁵³), that Paolo Odorico compares the “gnomological territory” to the Amazonian jungle⁵⁴—a jungle still largely unexplored (many collections are waiting for editions, and the study of their textual history and mutual relationship is in its *enfance*). In this exuberant corpus, Alexander’s presence owes much to the influence of the ancient tradition. The *Gnomologium Vaticanum* can be quoted as an example of a Byzantine collection with a conservative character, bearing witness to the importance of the Hellenistic legacy in medieval *florilegia*. It is arranged alphabetically, with maxims classified under the name of their locutor. Alexander is credited with 33 *apophthegms*, and appears as

formation”, “Tactical movements”, “On fires” (where an anecdote concerning Alexander of Pheres has been erroneously ascribed to Alexander of Macedon), “On lies addressed to one’s troops in their own interest”, “Climbing of steep mountains”, “On baggage”.

51 Leo praises Alexander for his speedy decision-making: “I have never postponed to the next day, he said, what could be done this very day” (*Tactica*, 20, 88, ed. Dennis).

52 *Syllogê*, 1, 24 (ed. Dain).

53 Marcel Richard, “Florilèges grecs”, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique: doctrine et histoire*, t. 5, fasc. 33–34 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1962), col. 476.

54 Paolo Odorico, “Gli gnomologi greci sacro-profani: una presentazione”, in *Aspetti di letteratura gnomica nel mondo antico*. 2, ed. Maria Serena Funghi (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 2004), 61.

an interlocutor or is mentioned in six more anecdotes involving his mother Olympias, the philosophers Aristotle, Anaxarchos and Xenocrates, the orator Demades and the historian Callisthenes.⁵⁵ In the anecdotes placed under his name, he appears in a very flattering light, as a hero endowed with loyalty, efficiency, generosity, courage and/or temperance. In the six other passages his portrayal is more mitigated, evidently depending of the nature of his relationship with the locutor of the *apophthegm*: he even appears as a tyrant in front of Anaxarchos, and as a megalomaniac in Demades' view. In the *Loci communes* of Pseudo-Maximus, probably one of the most successful "sacro-profane" *florilegia*⁵⁶ (combining pagan and Judeo-Christian maxims), the gnomological material has undergone little change as far as Alexander is concerned: it is still of exclusively profane origin and most of the maxims were already present in older collections.⁵⁷ The main innovation is due to the fact that the *apophthegms* have been dispatched into 71 chapters, organized thematically, exactly like Polyaeus' anecdotes in the Byzantine rewritings of the *Strategemata*. Thus, in the oldest of the three versions of the collection, the 23 anecdotes concerning Alexander feature under 14 headings illustrating various kinds of virtues: he is quoted four times in the chapter on "Courage and force", three times in the chapter on "Benevolence and gratitude", twice in the chapters on "Chastity and temperance", "Power and authority", "Respect for parents and love for children", "More is not always better", once in the chapters on "Friends and friendly affection", "Autarchy", "Prayer", "Fortune and infortune", "Silence and secrets", "Vain glory", "Old age and youth" and "Glory".⁵⁸ It is worth noting that all of

55 Several of these anecdotes are attested in Plutarch and/or in Theon's *Progymnasmata*, but their provenance cannot be specified with any certainty, for they were circulating widely already in the Roman period: for instance, the story of Alexander refusing to steal victory is attested under *chreia* form in a 1st or 2nd-c. papyrus, *P. Berol. Inv.* 21258v (cf. Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia*, 27–28).

56 About 90 manuscripts of the *Loci communes* have been preserved, representing three successive recensions: the oldest one was composed towards the end of the 9th or the beginning of the 10th c. (Max I, edited by Étienne Sargologos, *Florilège sacro-profane du Pseudo-Maxime*, Hermoupolis: Typokykladiki, 2001); a second, enlarged edition appeared around 1000 (Max II, edited by Margaret B. Phillips, *Loci communes of Maximus the Confessor. Vaticanus graecus 739*, St Louis University, 1977); the third one is an abridged version of the second edition (Max U, edited by Sibylle Ihm, *Ps.-Maximus Confessor. Erste kritische Edition einer Redaktion des Sacro-Profanen Florilegium Loci communes nebst einer vollständigen Kollation einer zweiten Redaktion und weiteren Material*, Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2001).

57 93% of the profane maxims featuring in the *Loci communes* are also known from other florilegia, according to Odorico, "Gli gnomologi", 86.

58 Ten of the twenty-three anecdotes of the *Loci communes* are lacking in the *Gnomologium*

the anecdotes conveying a negative view of Alexander have disappeared from the *Loci communes*, whose selection of *apophthegms* pictures an exemplary king,⁵⁹ endowed with a great sense of honour, benevolent towards his subjects, anxious of exerting his duty of king in the best possible way, but also highly conscious of being submitted, as anyone else, to the dire laws of the human condition—a favourite topic in Byzantine mirrors for princes. The popularity of the *Loci communes* contributed to the diffusion of an idealized view of Alexander, also to be found in many Byzantine works or chapters of works especially devoted to the Macedonian conqueror.

Byzantine Writing on Alexander (2): Between History and Fiction

Historiographical Texts

In spite of the abundance of their historical production, the Byzantines did not compose new histories or biographies of Alexander, perhaps because they were content with reading the texts of Diodorus, Plutarch and Arrian and found it useless to supplement or revise their works. This was also because, following the example of Thucydides, whom they considered as the greatest historian of Antiquity and the best model to imitate,⁶⁰ Byzantine historians devoted themselves to the history of the present or of the most recent past. It was the chroniclers' task to tell the story of mankind from the very beginning, and it is in this literary genre, profuse in Byzantium, that we can find developments of variable length about the reign of Alexander. While Byzantine chroniclers showed little interest in classical Greece, which they viewed as an alien world with its democratic city-states, they indeed felt more sympathy for Alexander, founder of a world-wide empire that could pass for a predecessor of the (supposedly) œcumenical Byzantine Empire.⁶¹ In Malalas, author of

Vaticanum: part of them are attested in Plutarch, Theon's *Progymnasmata*, Basil of Caesarea's *Address to young men on Greek literature*, Stobaeus; the two featuring in the chapter "More is not always better" were apparently borrowed from the *Alexander Romance* (where the motif "Less is more" takes pride of place).

59 The same is true in other Byzantine gnomologies as well, according to Francisco Rodriguez Adrados, *Greek Wisdom Literature and the Middle Ages. The Lost Greek Models and their Arabic and Castilian Translations* (Bern-Berlin-Bruxelles: P. Lang, 2009), 147.

60 Cf. Warren T. Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke—New York: Macmillan, 2013), 483.

61 Cf. Elizabeth Jeffreys, "The Attitude of Byzantine Chroniclers towards Ancient History", *Byzantion* 49 (1979), 199–238 (esp. 207, 214–215, 217–218, 230).

the first extant Byzantine chronicle, a three-pages development is devoted to Alexander,⁶² credited with an Egyptian father (Nectanebo), a strange physical appearance, and a biography some particulars of which (marriage with Darius' daughter, encounter with queen Candace) have been borrowed from the *Alexander Romance*. Malalas has mixed this material of Pseudo-Callisthenian origin with pieces of information he seems to have drawn from a mysterious "Bottios", perhaps a Late Antique historian or chronicler.⁶³ Such a heterogeneous combination results in the creation of a rather ambivalent image of the Macedonian king, oscillating between paganism and Christian providentialism. While performing human sacrifice and addressing prayers and libations to Achilles' spirit, Alexander also acts as an instrument of divine will, sent by God to chastise the Assyrians' "vain arrogance" and return to the "Romans" (that is the Byzantines) all the territories of which they had been deprived. Alexander is even compared with a leopard (παρδαλῖς) and thus assimilated to the third beast mentioned by the prophet Daniel in his first vision about the four successive world empires (*Dan.* 7). By presenting Alexander as the founder of Strategion, a Constantinopolitan place that Constantine the Great had chosen to be the forum of his new capital, Malalas also pictures the Macedonian king as a prefiguration of the first Christian emperor: it is highly significant that his campaign against the Persians starts precisely from this place that was the very heart of the Byzantine empire.

Malalas' chapter was much re-used (directly or indirectly) in later Byzantine chronicles; but, even if chronography is a derivative genre, mainly based upon compilation, each chronicler, by means of cutting, adding, or restructuring, is able to lend a new significance to recycled material and transform it into something different. This technique of *variatio* is particularly remarkable in George the Monk,⁶⁴ author of one of the most popular Byzantine chronicles,

62 Malalas, VII, 17 and VIII, 1–4 (ed. Thurn).

63 Bottios is quoted in a passage dealing with Alexander's expedition against the Persians, in response to divine will. According to Benjamin Garstad, "The Tyche sacrifices in John Malalas: Virgin Sacrifice and Fourth-Century Polemical History", *ICS* 30 (2005), esp. 87–93 and 129–131, Bo(u)ttios could be a 4th-century Antiochite Christian, author of a polemical, and heavily fictional history, directed against Julian, and source of the several *tyche* narratives disseminated in Malalas' chronicle.

64 Cf. Paolo Odorico, "Parce que je suis ignorant'. *Imitatio* / *variatio* dans la chronique de Georges le Moine", in *Imitatio—Aemulatio—Variatio: Akten des internationalen Wissenschaftlichen Symposions zur byzantinischen Sprache und Literatur*, Wien 22.–25. Oktober 2008, ed. Andreas Rhoby and Elisabeth Schiffer (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), 209–216.

transmitted in about 150 manuscripts, and also translated into Slavonic and Georgian. Though reproducing large passages from Malalas in his own chapter on Alexander,⁶⁵ George carefully expurgated his source from its most offending pagan elements (notably its reference to human sacrifice). He also interpolated into Malalas' account some new developments which profoundly modify the meaning of the whole sequence. The most prominent one, placed right at the centre of the chapter and occupying half of its length, is the story of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem, borrowed from Flavius Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* (XI, 297–347), and enlarged with a minute description of the costume of the high priest, which happens to be a patchwork of excerpts from the *Septuaginta*, Josephus, Theodoretus and Anastasios Sinaites. The second longest addition features at the very end of the chapter, where George the Monk, following Palladius' opus-cule *On the Peoples of India* (I, 2–15), narrates Alexander's visit to the Brahmins. The admiration Alexander expresses regarding the Indian sages' ascetic way of life, piety and "high philosophy", mirrors the feelings he was credited with towards the high priest in the Jerusalemite episode. George the Monk's chronicle is an edifying work whose didactic purpose is clearly indicated in the very preface.⁶⁶ The two interpolations dealing with Alexander's visit to Jerusalem and his encounter with the Brahmins contribute to draw the portrait of a pious, exemplary king. But, in this chronicle written at a time when the memory of the iconoclastic crisis was still fresh,⁶⁷ the Jerusalemite episode can also be read as a variation on a theme dear to George the Monk: Alexander's prostration before the high priest, is to be compared with the respectful attitude of Christian emperors of the past, such as Constantine, Valens or Theodosius, towards saintly monks, illustrating the primacy of spiritual over political power.⁶⁸ To quote Paul Magdalino, George's chapter on Alexander is "history rewritten from an orthodox point of view".⁶⁹

65 I, 17 and 19 (ed. de Boor, revised by Wirth).

66 George says his work was composed "with fear of God and belief" and it comprises things "that bring forth the salvation of souls well disposed and orthodox, and teach and illuminate them" (Prol., ed. de Boor, 2 and 3).

67 The "Triumph of Orthodoxy" was celebrated in 843; the much discussed date of composition of George's chronicle oscillates between the 840es and 870es. For a short review of the main arguments, with further bibliography, see Alexander Kazhdan, *A History of Byzantine Literature (850–1000)*, edited by Christine Angelidi (Athens: Institute for Byzantine Research, 2006), 43–44.

68 Cf. Marina Detoraki, "Chronicon animae utile. La Chronique de Georges le Moine et les récits édifiants", in *Myriobiblos: Essays on Byzantine literature and culture*, ed. Theodora Antonopoulou, Sofia Kotzabassi and Marina Loukaki (Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 103–130.

69 Paul Magdalino, "Byzantine Encyclopaedism of the Ninth and Tenth Century", in *Ency-*

While in Malalas' chronicle, the ambivalence of Alexander's portrait resulted from the juxtaposition, in one and the same chapter, of conflicting material, in George's case ambiguity is due to the presence of a second (much shorter) development concerning Alexander's reign (VII, 1). A distinctive feature of George's chronicle is indeed that its two first parts deal roughly with the same period (from the creation of the world up to the Hellenistic times) but according to different sources: while in the first part George follows Malalas as his chief source, in the second part he offers a narrative mainly based upon the *Septuaginta*.⁷⁰ Subsequently, his second notice about Alexander is an almost *verbatim* quotation from *Macc.* 1, 1–9, that is a passage of a rather different tonality from the first chapter, for it puts to the fore Alexander's aggressive behaviour (he "made many wars, and won many strongholds, and slew many kings, toparchs, generals, satraps and tyrants ..."), his arrogance ("his heart was greatly exalted"), and the devastating reign of his successors ("they all put crowns upon themselves {...} and evils were multiplied in the earth"). This Biblical, critical image of the Macedonian empire sharply contrasts with the first, idealized portrait of Alexander as a pious king and is revealing of the reservations he sometimes inspired to the Byzantines.

Also one of the most widely read Byzantine chroniclers, in spite of the semi-erudite quality of his work, Zonaras⁷¹ stands apart from the other authors insofar as he is not at all indebted to Malalas and thus keeps out of the Pseudo-Callisthenian tradition: his account of Alexander's reign⁷² is almost entirely based on Plutarch's *Life*, completed with two excerpts from Josephus (Alexander's visit to Jerusalem) and from Arrian (Alexander's attempted suicide). Though it offers a rather faithful *epitome* of Plutarch's biography, Zonaras' chapter is nevertheless differentiated by a marked encomiastic tonality: the Byzantine chronicler dwells on episodes illustrating Alexander's magnanimity (clemency towards the Theban prisoner Timocleia), wisdom (encounter with Diogenes), temperance (respectful attitude towards Darius' wife); he repeatedly emphasizes Alexander's heroism, but suppresses or drastically shortens

clopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance, ed. Jason König and Greg Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 230. Though more alive to the anecdotal dimension of George's chronicle, Kazhdan concludes that he was not a historian, but "a pious enter-tainer" (*A History of Byzantine Literature*, 52).

70 Cf. Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, 118.

71 Zonaras' chronicle, probably composed during the reign of John II Comnenos (1118–1143), survives in a great number of manuscripts and was also translated into Slavonic, like George the Monk's much more popular work.

72 IV, 8–15 (ed. Pinder, I, 329–355).

all the episodes where the Macedonian king appeared in a negative or dubious light (destruction of Persepolis by fire, Dionysiac carousing in Carmania, attempts at self-deification, adoption of Barbarian customs). Zonaras also accentuates the apologetic tendency already discernible in many passages of Plutarch's biography, and voluntarily blackens all the victims of Alexander, notably Philotas and Cleitos, so that their deaths appear as merited chastisement. Besides, his selection of material testifies a pronounced liking for *apophthegms*: he retains preferentially passages including sayings of Alexander (part of which are also attested in Byzantine gnomologies) so that his biography of Alexander appears "anecdotalized". Zonaras' portrait of the Macedonian king is undeniably that of an idealized ruler, but his Alexander is also very similar to the witty hero haunting the pages of so many Byzantine *florilegia* and military treatises.

The cleverness that characterizes Alexander in collections of stratagems and *apophthegms* is also an important component of his portrait in the *Alexander Romance*. While the Byzantines did not rewrite but only excerpted or epitomized Diodorus', Plutarch's and Arrian's histories of Alexander, his Pseudo-Callisthenian biography was extremely productive. Being a "popular" work, unprotected by the respect reserved for classical texts, it underwent "fluid transmission":⁷³ copyists felt free to re-write their model, modifying its wording, subtracting some details or even whole episodes, and adding new ones, which they thought well fit to embellish the story of Alexander. During the Byzantine millenium, seven successive rewritings of the *Romance* were produced (recensions β, λ, ε, and γ, *Poem of the Marcianus gr.* 408, recension ζ, *Rimada*⁷⁴), some of which even include "sub-recensions", due to intensive reworking and interpolating.⁷⁵ A small part of these texts is datable with a relative precision (the oldest rewriting, β, was composed during the 5th century, ε

73 On this notion, see Leighton D. Reynolds and Nigel G. Wilson, *D'Homère à Érasme. La transmission des classiques grecs et latins*, French translation by Claude Bertrand revised by Pierre Petitmengin (Paris: Éd. du CNRS, 1988), 162–164.

74 On these texts, see Corinne Jouanno, *Naissance et métamorphoses du Roman d'Alexandre. Domaine grec* (Paris: Éd. du CNRS, 2002) and "La littérature gréco-byzantine", "Mutations grecques tardives du *Roman d'Alexandre*", "Alexandre en Grèce: roi de guerre, homme de boue", "Voyages de l'Alexandre grec: le goût des merveilles et sa mise en question", in *La Fascination pour Alexandre le Grand dans les littératures européennes (XI^e–XVI^e siècles). Réinventions d'un mythe*, ed. Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), I, 102–105 and 649–678; II, 1223–1268; III, 1677–1707; IV, 517–531 (with further bibliography).

75 That is the case for the ζ recension: cf. Ulrich Moennig, *Die spätbyzantinische Rezension *ζ des Alexanderromans* (Köln: Romiosini, 1992), 38–45.

towards the end of the 8th or the beginning of the 9th century; the *Rimada* was published in Venice in 1529); but other texts are wavering in a sort of chronological “no man’s land” (the dating of γ , compiled from β and ϵ , oscillates between the 9th and the 14th century, date of the oldest manuscript).

Four of these Byzantine versions of the *Romance* (β , λ , *Marc. gr.* 408, *Rimada*) can be classified as conservative rewritings, as far as they keep on picturing Alexander as a pagan hero: the author of β , the oldest work of the series, was content with expurgating the text of his model (α recension) from much of the Egyptian material introduced by its Alexandrian author, and with simplifying the wording of the narrative, in order to make Alexander’s story more easily readable; he also eliminated the few echoes to Alexander’s “black legend” that were subsisting in the α recension, so as to portray an impeccable hero.⁷⁶ Besides, being anxious to offer a more exciting version of Alexander’s adventures, he completed his fictional biography with new episodes of a fabulous kind (travel through the land of darkness, discovery of the fountain of life, encounter with various monsters)—a tendency then followed by many rewriters of the *Romance*, and giving way to celebrated episodes such as Alexander’s ascension to heaven or submarine exploration, which first appeared in the λ recension, probably around the 7th or 8th century.

In the three other rewritings of the *Romance* (ϵ , γ , ζ), the Alexander material has undergone more radical changes, and the pagan king has been transformed into a Christian hero. The author of the ϵ recension opened the way by inserting into Alexander’s story the episode of his visit to Jerusalem, modified in order to show the Macedonian king converting to monotheism. Alexander thus becomes a confessor of the true faith and an instrument of divine Providence who encloses the Unclean Nations of Gog and Magog at the margins of the world to prevent them from polluting the earth before the advent of the Last Days. The late Byzantine recension ζ , derived from ϵ , expanded this very image by transforming Alexander into a Messianic figure, who acts under the protection of the “great god Sabaoth” and his earthly messenger, the prophet Jeremiah. The author has even introduced into the Jerusalemite episode a reference to Daniel’s prophecies about the succession of the world empires, in order to present Alexander’s victory over Darius as a result of divine will.

The episode of Gog and Magog, present in ϵ , γ and ζ , was borrowed from Pseudo-Methodius’ *Apocalypse*, probably the most famous representative of apocalyptic literature, a flourishing genre in Medieval Greece, from the times of

76 The same process was observable in Zonaras’ *epitome* of Plutarch’s *Life of Alexander* (as noted above).

Arabic expansion up to the collapse of the Empire, and even beyond.⁷⁷ Alexander occupies a significant place in the apocalyptic tradition, where he makes his first appearance in texts of Syriac origin, produced between 628 and 638, the so-called *Syriac Alexander Legend* and the *Metrical Homily* by Pseudo-Jacob of Sarug. A few decades later, towards the end of the 7th century, he reappears in the original, Syriac version of Pseudo-Methodius' *Apocalypse*, which was soon translated into Greek probably at the very beginning of the 8th century:⁷⁸ there he is credited with a crucial role in the history of mankind, both as a constructor of the gates destined to prevent Gog and Magog's invasion, and as an ancestor of the Last Roman Emperor who, after a successful military campaign against the Arabs and a pious reign in peace and prosperity, is destined to go to Jerusalem and surrender his power to God at the arrival of the Antichrist. Pseudo-Methodius resorted to fanciful genealogical manipulations to establish a relationship between Alexander and the Last Roman (i.e. Byzantine) emperor: Alexander, he maintains, was born from Philip and Cuseth, daughter of the king of Ethiopia, who then remarried Byzas, founder of Byzantium, and begot Byzantia, mother-to-be of the kings of Rome, Byzantium and Alexandria. The supposedly Ethiopian roots of the Byzantine Empire are aimed to put its role at the end of times in accordance to *Psalms* 68, 31: "Ethiopia shall hasten to stretch out her hand readily to God".⁷⁹

The same genealogical construct was reproduced in apocalyptic texts influenced by Pseudo-Methodius and belonging to the corpus of the so-called *Visions of Daniel*,⁸⁰ whose popularity and influence on the foreign policy of

77 On the role of eschatological thinking in the making of Byzantine history, see Paul Magdalino, "The History of the Future and its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda", in *The Making of Byzantine History: Studies dedicated to D. Nicol*, ed. Roderick Beaton and Charlotte Roueché (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), 3–34. On the popularity of apocalyptic literature after the fall of Constantinople, notably in the 16th and 17th centuries, see Cyril Mango, "The Legend of Leo the Wise", *ZRVI* 6 (1960), 78–85.

78 Cf. Willem Johan Aerts and George A.A. Kortekaas, *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius. Die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998).

79 This para-historical genealogy may have been invented to win the support of the monophysite populations of Africa, prone to collaborate with the Muslim enemy: cf. Gerrit J. Reinink, "Ps. Methodius: A concept of history in response to the rise of Islam", in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East. Problems in the Literary Source Material*, ed. Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1992), 149–187.

80 Comprehensive presentation of the corpus of apocryphal Daniel Apocalypses in Lorenzo DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the apocryphal Daniel literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 87–230. Useful survey in Andras Kraft, "The Last Roman Emperor Topos in the Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition", *Byzantion* 82 (2012), 227–239.

Byzantines and Saracens alike are mocked by Liudprand of Cremona in the report of his second embassy at the Byzantine court.⁸¹ Thus, we meet again Alexander's Ethiopian genealogy in the *Pseudo-Chrysostom Apocalypse* (§1–3),⁸² which may have been composed at Constantinople in the mid 9th century.⁸³ In other apocalyptic texts, Alexander, though not mentioned explicitly, is nevertheless recognizable under the guise of some or other of the emperors of the Last Times: as a matter of fact, in many Byzantine apocalyptic texts, Pseudo-Methodius' one and only Last Emperor has been replaced by a series of two, four, or even five emperors, and the abdication of the last one does not even coincide with the end of the world but only marks the beginning of the events of the Last Days, which now include the irruption of Gog and Magog and the arrival of the Antichrist, transferred into a more remote future.⁸⁴ In the *Visions of Daniel on the Seven-Hill City* (8th/9th c.) and in the *Last Vision of the Prophet Daniel* (11th/12th c.), one can guess Alexander's presence under the guise of the second and last emperor, who will surrender his power in Jerusalem after a twelve-year reign; as for the four sons who after his death will wage a

81 Embassy, 39: "But I ask you to note why he [the emperor Nikephoros] lead the army against the Assyrians just now. The Greeks and the Saracens have books that they call *ὁράσεις*, or visions, of Daniel, and I call Sibylline books, in which it is found written how many years a certain emperor may live, what the nature of future times under his rule may be, whether peace or hostility shall prevail, whether things shall favor or hamper the Saracens. In them you read that in Nikephoros' times the Assyrians shall not be able to resist the Greeks and he will live for seven years only; after his death an even worse emperor <...> is supposed to arise, in whose reign the Assyrians are supposed to prevail, so that they are supposed to acquire everything by force, right up to Chalcedon, which is not at all far from Constantinople. They both pay close attention to the schedules; for one and the same reason the Greeks, encouraged, now hound their enemies, and the Saracens, dispirited, do not resist, awaiting the time when they in turn shall hound their enemies and the Greeks again will not resist." (*The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona*, transl. Paolo Squatriti, Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007).

82 On this text (also known as the *Discourses of John Chrysostom concerning the Visions of Daniel*), see DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel*, 155–158 and 362–363; Kraft, "The Last Roman Emperor Topos", 231–233. Ed. Afanasii Vassiliev, *Anecdota graeco-byzantina. Pars prior* (Moscow: Universitas Caesarea, 1893), 33–38; Hans Schmoltdt, *Die Schrift Vom Jungen Daniel und Danielis letzten Vision. Herausgabe und Interpretation zweier apokalyptischen Texte* (Diss. Hamburg, 1972), 220–241.

83 According to Paul Julius Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 72–77. DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel*, 155–158 is more doubtful.

84 Kraft speaks of a "reluctance to see the world end just yet" ("The Last Roman Emperor Topos", 252).

devastating civil war,⁸⁵ their mention is clearly reminiscent of the quarrels of Alexander's successors.⁸⁶ In the *Life of Andreas Salos*, written by Nikephoros Presbyter in the first half of the 10th century, Alexander is recognizable in the fourth and next-to-last emperor of the Last Times, whose Ethiopian origin is evidently inspired by the para-historical genealogy of Pseudo-Methodius: "Then the emperor of Ethiopia from the first horn (cf. *Dan.* 8, 8) will come, who, they say, will hold the helm of the Empire for twelve years. He will be a good ruler and reign in peace and restore churches of saints ruined before him, and because of his goodness he will be loved by the people. During his reign the love of the Lord will spread over the whole world, and there will be joy and gladness" (860 b–c).⁸⁷ Alexander's "bad sons" have also found their place in the *Life of Andreas Salos*, but they are mentioned only after the reign and abdication of the fifth, and final, emperor and their number has been reduced to three, perhaps owing to a confusion with the figure of the *triumviri*, alluded to in the *Sibylline books*.⁸⁸

Conclusion: "Faraway, so close"⁸⁹

Arriving at the end of this survey of Alexander's presence in Byzantine culture, one should first underline the predominantly positive character of the image of the Macedonian king in Byzantium: he was never demonized in Medieval Greece as he has been in Western Europe, where he was often presented as a symbol of the deadly sin of pride, and this is probably due to the absence in

85 On these texts, see DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel*, 126–130 and 354–356 (*Seven-Hilled*), 186–192 and 366–374 (*Last Vision*); Kraft, "The Last Roman Emperor Topos", 236–239. Ed.: Vassiliev, *Anecdota*, 43–47 (*Last Vision*); Schmoldt, *Die Schrift Vom Jungen Daniel*, 114–187 (*Last Vision*, Greek text 122–145) and 190–201 (*Seven-Hilled*).

86 Their number corresponds to the four παῖδες described as Alexander's successors in the historical section of Pseudo-Methodius' *Apocalypse* (ch. 9): cf. Kraft, "The Last Roman Emperor Topos", 254.

87 On this text, transmitted in around 90 manuscripts, see Lennart Rydén, "The Andreas Salos Apocalypse. Greek Text, Translation and Commentary", *DOP* 28 (1974), 197–261. According to Rydén, the first, thirty-two-years emperor, raised up from poverty, represents Constantine the Great; the second, three-and-a-half-years emperor, described as a son of lawlessness, is Constantius II, who supported Arianism; the third, impious emperor corresponds to Julian the Apostate; the last, one-year emperor, destined to abdicate at Jerusalem, is Jovian, who restored Christianity (ibid. 243).

88 Cf. Rydén, "The Andreas Salos Apocalypse", 235, 238, 245–247.

89 Wim Wenders, 1993 (original title "In weiter Ferne, so nah!").

the Greek world of strongly critical historical sources, such as Curtius Rufus and Orosius, and to the subsequently rather indulgent judgement passed by the Greek Church Fathers on the Macedonian king. However, reservations about Alexander are found more frequently in Byzantine learned works than in popular productions: the authors of imperial panegyrics, while ready to compare Byzantine rulers with the Macedonian conqueror, often seem reluctant to present the latter as an exemplary king because of his paganism and his too warlike spirit. On the reverse, in many world chronicles and rewritings of the *Romance*, Alexander has been medievalized, so that his image becomes more easily compatible with Byzantine religious and political ideals. We thus remark the existence of a lasting tension between a tendency to appropriate the Macedonian conqueror and transform him into a predecessor, or even a figure of Byzantine emperor, and the persistent apprehension of his belonging to a remote, alien past. Prominent in “popular” literature, the first tendency, encouraged by the Medieval habit of typological interpretation, can be discerned as well in the few Byzantine visual images of Alexander that have survived, and almost all illustrate one and the same episode, Alexander’s aerial journey: this scene, inspired by the *Romance*, was indeed often represented on textiles, sumptuary objects (crowns, cups, boxes, seals, medallions ...), many of which seem to be of imperial provenance, and even on reliefs placed at the entrance of churches (Saint Sophia in Constantinople, Mistra).⁹⁰ The most remarkable characteristic in these images of Alexander’s flight is the choice made by the artists of picturing the Macedonian king with the garments and the attributes of a Byzantine emperor: subjected to actualizing reinterpretation, the Pseudo-Callisthenian episode is thus transformed into an image of the Byzantine dominance over the *oikoumene*.⁹¹

90 Cf. Chiara Settis Frugoni, *Historia Alexandri elevati per griphos ad aerem: origine, iconografia e fortuna di un tema* (Rome: Istituto palazzo Borromini, 1973). The popularity of such images is attested by Michael Psellos, who makes an allusive reference to visual representations of the episode of Alexander’s flight in a letter addressed to Nikolaos Cheilas (*Ep.* 12, ed. Sathas, 246: ὁ Μακεδὼν ἐκείνος ἀνὴρ ᾧ τοὺς γρύπας ὑποξευγνύουσιν οἱ γραφεῖς, καὶ γῆθεν μετεωρίζουσι ...). The medaillon of Byzantine provenance, representing Alexander’s ascent, on the Pala d’Oro now in the Church of San Marco at Venice may offer us an example of an image contemporary to Psellos, if it dates from the mid-eleventh century, as suggested by Trahoulia, *The Venice Alexander Romance*, 181–186.

91 Cf. Ioli Kalavrezou, “The Marvelous Flight of Alexander”, in *Medieval Greek Storytelling: Fictionality and Narrative in Byzantium*, ed. Panagiotis Roilos (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 103–114.

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Church Fathers and the Reception of Alexander the Great*

Jaakkojuhani Peltonen

For the virtue of those who have done great deeds is esteemed in proportion to the ability with which it has been praised by men of genius. Alexander the Great of Macedon who is spoken of by Daniel as the ram, or the panther, or the he-goat, on reaching the grave of Achilles exclaimed ‘Happy Youth! To have the privilege of a great herald of your worth’, meaning, of course, Homer.¹



The above quotation is taken from the preface of Jerome’s (ca. 347–420 AD) *Vita Hilarionis* (*Life of Hilarion*). In his work Jerome provides an idealized picture of Hilarion—anchorite and saint. Even though Alexander was not the subject of the work, it is interesting how Jerome connects together Classical and Jewish literary tradition on Alexander the Great. The anecdote of Alexander weeping at the grave of Achilles was commonplace in the Classical Greco-Roman literature appearing in Cicero, Plutarch, Arrian and the *Historia Augusta*.² The writer showed he was aware of the long ‘pagan’ tradition surrounding the famous con-

* I thank Ville Vuolanto and Sari Kataja-Peltomaa of Tampere University and Kenneth Moore, the editor of this volume, for carefully reading the manuscript and giving helpful comments.

- 1 Jer. *Vita. Hil.* pref. 9–11: *Eorum enim qui fecere, virtus tanta habetur, quantum eam verbis potuere praeclara ingenia. Alexander Magnus Macedo, quem vel arietem, vel pardum, vel hircum caprarum Daniel vocat, cum ad Achillis tumulum pervenisset: ‘Felicem, ait, juvenis, qui magno frueris praecone meritum!’ Homerum videlicet significans.* (transl. Henry Fremantle.)
- 2 Cic. *Arch.* 24; Plut. *Alex.* 15.4; Arr. *An.* 1.12. 1–2. *Hist. Aug. Prob.* 1–2. Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 761–770 treats at length the question of whether the writer of *Historia Augusta* and Jerome derived their Alexander anecdote from Cicero, or copied it from elsewhere.

queror and adjusted this tradition to his literary task. Secondly, Jerome refers to the supposed role of Alexander in the Book of Daniel as the “bronze, leopard, and he-goat”. The fame of the king called ‘the Great’ is an undisputed fact that the writer introduces to his audience.

Jerome’s passage shows that early Christian writers knew of both the Classical and Jewish traditions of Alexander and that they also wrote about the themes derived from the previous literature. Was there a certain ‘one’, or several receptions of Alexander that appear in the texts of the Church Fathers,³ and how much do these receptions derive from the Roman or Jewish fascination with Alexander? An important issue for this present study is how the early Christian writers used the old material and made it fit in with their own literary and rhetorical interests. I seek to outline the pivotal themes in early Christian passages concerning Alexander, and to examine the reception of Alexander in its contemporary contexts.

The reception of Alexander in the early Christian writers has received very little scholarly interest. George Cary (1956) treated some passages of Augustine and Orosius as an introduction for the later, Medieval Alexander literature and considered medieval texts as derivatives of them.⁴ Richard Stoneman referred briefly to the existence of Alexander as an *exemplum* in the texts of the Church Fathers but did not analyse or discuss the existence of vast amounts of source material.⁵ Brian Harding’s *The Use of Alexander in Augustine’s City of God* (2008), addresses Augustine’s use of Alexander as *exemplum*. However, besides Augustine and Orosius there exists significant material from Christian writers such as Tatian, Tertullian, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom, whose passages concerning Alexander have not been analysed in depth amongst the earlier scholarship. These texts of Christian writers represent various literary genres like religious treaties, chronicles and private letters. In this study, I have examined the early Christian material; I will concentrate on those passages that best represent the main themes occurring in the whole *corpus*.⁶ I

3 In this present article, I use the term ‘Church Fathers’ referring to early Christian writers who composed their works from the second to the fifth century AD.

4 George Cary, *The Medieval Alexander* (Cambridge University Press, 1956), 68–70.

5 Richard Stoneman, “Legacy of Alexander in Philosophy”, in *Brill’s Companion to Alexander the Great*, ed. Joseph Roisman (Boston: Brill 2003), 347 (esp. footnote 67). Cf. Richard Stoneman, “Introduction: The Latin Base Texts for Medieval Alexander Literature”, in *Brill’s Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Zuwiya, Z. David (Brill 2011), 1–21, which does not deal with the works of the church father as a source for the Medieval Alexander.

6 For more of the quotations, see Peltonen forthcoming. Christian Djurslev’s *Alexander the Great in the Early Christian Tradition* will be published in 2018. Unfortunately, I was not able to take this forthcoming book into my analysis.

will not deal with the *Alexander Romance* traditions since they appear to have impacted the early Christian writers from the sixth century AD onwards and are as such outside of my present scope here.⁷

Understanding the role of Alexander in the early Christian literature will shine new light on the way that early Christian writers approached the Classical past as a means of explaining their present. This article will demonstrate the popularity of a posthumous Alexander 'industry' within the Christian writers and its functions at a time when Christianity rose from a persecuted sect to the Roman state religion. Secondly, understanding the role of Alexander in the early Christian literature is important for understanding the later medieval reception of Alexander. In the previous studies on the medieval reception of Alexander, the early Christian passages on the king have not received much attention but the scholarly interest has been laid on the impact of the *Alexander Romance* and Jewish traditions.⁸

Early Christian writers can be described as men between two worlds, the old Greco-Roman world and the emerging Judeo-Christian one. The majority of them had received a Classical education containing rhetoric, grammar and philosophy. They well knew the Classical tradition and Classical literature. Not only were they aware of the stories of Classical mythology and history, but they were also aware of the ways that a trained rhetorician would refer to these stories. In addition, they also were familiar with Biblical tradition and Jewish literature which differed radically from the Roman and Greek material on Alexander. With these matters in mind, this chapter will first analyse the way that a critical and negative image of the king, deriving from the Classical Latin literature, appears in the early Christian literature from the second century to the fifth century. Then I will deal with the positive tradition on Alexander, *imitatio Alexandri* and its functions in the early Christian literature. In the last part of this article the impact of the Jewish literary tradition on the works of the Christian writers will be discussed.

7 I will end my study to Fulgentius who is the first writer of antiquity to use *Alexander Romance*. Cf. Richard Stoneman, "Introduction: The Latin Base Texts for Medieval Alexander Literature", in *Brill's Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Zuwiya, Z. David (Brill 2011), 13. For the various *Romance* traditions, see chapters 20 and 21 of this volume.

8 Richard Stoneman, "Introduction: The Latin Base Texts for Medieval Alexander Literature", in *Brill's Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages* ed. Zuwiya, Z. David (Brill 2011), 1–21; Markus Stock ed. *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages—Transcultural Perspectives* (University of Toronto press 2016) did not pay attention to the early Christian passages concerning Alexander when they deal with the precursors of medieval Alexander literature. For the prestige of the Church Fathers from the 9th century onwards in Europe, see

The Critical Image of the King and the Early Christian Apologists

When the early Christian authors wrote about Alexander they referred to one of the most often-cited and iconic figures in Classical literature. Diana Spencer aptly writes that “Roman culture is saturated with themes that scream ‘Alexander’”.⁹ In the Classical world the reception of Alexander varied from the heroic conqueror and philosopher-king to the bloodthirsty tyrant whose reign brought destruction and pain to the whole inhabited world.¹⁰ The first idealizing portraits of the king were produced already in the early Hellenistic periods (by Callisthenes and Ptolemy), and the idealizing and heroic portrait can be read from the Greek and Roman writers of Second Sophistic like Plutarch, Dion Chrysostom and Arrian.¹¹ In the Roman Latin literature, starting from Livy and Cicero, we can find passages referring to king’s vices and condemning some of his actions.¹² Particularly, Roman Latin Stoic writers launched critical portraits of Alexander being radically different from the heroic and positive portraits of the king as Greek cultural hero and representative of Greek *paideia*.

In the very earliest Christian literature we can distinguish how the critical portraits of the king became popular in the way the apologists wrote about Alexander. One of the first examples of this which we encounter is in Tatian’s (120–180) *Address to the Greeks* (*Oratio ad Graecos*), which connects the critical portrait of Alexander’s career to the critique of Aristotle and ‘pagan’ philosophy. In the first part of the work Tatian criticizes pagan philosophy and culture depicted as being inferior to Christian wisdom and he undertakes this attack by

Irena Backus (ed.), *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West from the Carolingians to the Maurists*. Two volumes (Brill 1997).

- 9 Diana Spencer, “Roman Alexanders: Epistemology and Identity”, in *Alexander the Great: A New History*, ed. Waldemar Heckel et al. (Chichester: Blackwell, 2009), 252.
- 10 Cf. Plut. *Mor.* 335f; Sen. *Clem.* 1.25.1.
- 11 For the idealizing portrait of Alexander in Callisthenes, see Diana Spencer, *The Roman Alexander* (University of Exeter Press, 2002), 5–9; Paul Cartledge, *Alexander the Great—The Hunt for a New Past*, (Pan Books, 2004), 247–249. For the reception of Alexander in the Greek writers of the Second Sophistic, see Sulochana Asirvatham, “Classicism and Romanitas in Plutarch’s *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute*”, *American Journal of Philology* 126. (2005), 107–125. Asirvatham, Sulochana, “His Son’s Father? Philip in the Second Sophistic”, in *Philip II and Alexander the Great: father and son, lives and afterlives*, ed. Elizabeth Carney and Daniel Ogden (Oxford University Press 2010), 193–205.
- 12 Diana Spencer has written several studies on the Latin reception of Alexander. See esp. *Roman Alexander* (University of Exeter Press, 2002).

the historical *exempla* he has chosen from Classical literature.¹³ In the passage all the known faults of Alexander's serve to stress the failure of his education and peripatetic teachings:

And Aristotle, who absurdly placed a limit to Providence and made happiness to consist in the things which give pleasure, quite contrary to his duty as a preceptor flattered Alexander, forgetful that he was but a youth; and he, showing how well he had learned the lessons of his master, because his friend would not worship him shut him up and carried him about like a bear or a leopard. He in fact obeyed strictly the precepts of his teacher in displaying manliness and courage by feasting, and transfixing with his spear his intimate and most beloved friend, and then, under a semblance of grief, weeping and starving himself, that he might not incur the hatred of his friends.¹⁴

An angry and drunken Alexander, killing his friend during the banquets and throwing his friends savagely to lions, was commonplace in Classical Latin literature. Tatian was probably here following the passages of Valerius Maximus and Seneca who wrote about the murder of Cleitus and throwing Lysimachus to a lion.¹⁵ However, the catalogue of the king's vices was not the only part of Classical Latin literature which Tatian was following in the passage. Roman Stoic writers in Latin had also addressed their critique of Aristotelian doctrine according

13 For the critique of Classical philosophic schools, see Emily J. Hunt, *Christianity in the Second Century: The case of Tatian* (Routledge, 2003), 98–102. She calls it as Tatian's hostility towards hellenistic philosophy.

14 Tatian. *Ad. Gr.* 2.1: "Καί Ἀριστοτέλης ἀμαθῶς ὅρον τῇ προνοίᾳ θεις, καί τήν εὐδαιμονίαν ἐν οἷς ἡρέσχετο περιγράψας λίαν ἀπαιδεύτως, Ἀλεξανδρόν τε μεμνημένος μειράχιον ἐχολάκευεν· Ὅστις Ἀριστοτέλικῶς πάνυ τόν ἑαυτοῦ φίλον, διά τό μὴ Βούλεσθαι αὐτόν προσκυνεῖν καθείρξας, ὥσπερ ἄρκτον ἢ πάρδαλιν, περιέφερε. Πάνυ γοῦν ἐπειθετο τοῖς τοῦ διδασκάλου δόγμασι, τήν ἀνδρείαν καί τήν ἀρετήν συμποσίοις ἐπιδεινύμενος, καί τόν οἰκείον καί πάνυ φίλτατον διαπείρων τῷ δόρατι, καί πάλιν κλαίων καί ἀποκαρτερῶν προφάσει λύπης, ἵνα ὑπό τῶν οἰκείων μὴ μισθῇ." (transl. J.E. Ryland).

15 Valerius Maximus writes: "What prevented him [Alexander] reaching the heavens if not his throwing Lysimachus to a lion, running Cleitus through with a spear." (transl. Henry John Walker). Val. Max. 9.3. ext. 1. Seneca's *On Anger* alludes to *Clitum carissimum ... inter epulas transfodit* ("He stabbed his dearest friend Cleitus at a feast") and explains that the reason for the murder was the fact that Cleitus was not willing to flatter the king and transform himself from a free Macedonian man into a Persian slave. In the following sentence Seneca lists that Alexander acted similarly when he threw his friend (*aeque familiarem*) Lysimachus to lions. Sen. *De Ira.* 3.17.1–2. Emily J. Hunt, *Christianity in the*

to which showing anger was deemed acceptable.¹⁶ The Roman writers based their critics on the Aristotelian views of anger by referring to Alexander as the archetype of the angry king and pupil of Aristotle. In Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* the story that Alexander almost hurt himself in remorse after killing Cleitus was to stress the errors in Aristotelian views and to promote the absolutist Stoic position against anger.¹⁷ In Tatian, this detail is however stressing the failure of the king without any positive comments—the king's repentance was not for the action itself but for the fear of punishment and disfavour.¹⁸

Contrary to Cicero, Seneca and Valerius Maximus, in Tatian the critique of Aristotle is part of the anti-pagan rhetoric that occurs in the *Address to Greeks*. Tatian is not concentrating on anger itself but on the teachings of pagan philosophers, the concept of manliness and the actions of their famous pupils. Tatian's Alexander should be seen in the context of rhetoric directed to question the importance and value of Classical culture compared to Christian religion and its moral superiority. By the catalogue of Alexander's false actions Tatian is mocking the existing values of traditional Greco-Roman culture. In the passage Tatian writes that Alexander was following the teachings of Aristotle on manliness and courage when he killed his friends. Implicitly, Tatian is praising the Christian virtues above the Classical cardinal virtues. The misconduct characterized as typical for the illustrious pupil of Aristotle is marshalled in support of the Christian worldview to think and live with a consistent and cohesive Biblical perspective.

Tatian was not the only early Christian writer exploiting the previous critical Latin portraits of the king in their argumentation. In his *Apology*, Tertullian (ca. 155–ca. 220) writes a couple of decades after Tatian about the relationship

Second Century: The case of Tatian (Routledge, 2003), 101 suggest that Tatian was referring to Callisthenes' captivity not on Lysimachus. This seems unlikely on the grounds of the passages above.

- 16 According to Aristotle's opinion one should not avoid anger as such, but be angry with right people for the right reasons. Harris 2001, 94. For Aristotelian views on anger, see William H. William, *Restraining Rage—The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity*, (Harvard University Press, 2001), 93–96.
- 17 In contrast Arrian praised Alexander's remorse after the king had killed Cleitus, cf. *Ar. An.* 4.9.2–3; 7.29.1–2.
- 18 Seneca's remark that Alexander was taught by Aristotle (*ex Aristotelis sinu regem*) when describing the king's violent actions can be connected with his critique of Aristotle's views on anger. Sen. *De Ira.* 3.17.1. Valerius Maximus refers to Alexander's actions for purpose to stress the harmful impacts of anger (*ira*) and hatred (*odium*). Val Max. 9.3. pref. Aristotle's views being criticized in Sen. *De. Ira* 1.9.2 and in Sen *De. Ira.* 3.3. See also Seneca's *Letters* 85, 116, 99.15.

between Alexander and Aristotle: "The same Aristotle's shameful tutorship of Alexander is equivalent to flattery."¹⁹ In the passage, Tertullian compares Aristotle and Christians on *modestia* and rails against the conduct of the Greek philosophers Diogenes, Pythagoras and Anaxagoras, placing their teachings and lifestyle in contrast to Christian wisdom. In the passage, the tutorship is described as a failure, which follows the previous critical Latin tradition but in contrast to the Greek tradition which portrayed the relationship between Alexander and Aristotle as ideal.²⁰ As with Tatian, the main argument of Tertullian was radically different from that of the Classical writers: to attack the traditional philosophy and its famous representatives, not on certain separate philosophical ideas.

In his *On the Mantle* (*De Pallio*), Tertullian refers to the theme of Alexander's orientalism in terms of how the king changed his Macedonian dress to Persian attire. *On the Mantle* is a speech about the decision to change clothing from the standard Roman toga to the philosopher's *pallium*. The work itself and its purpose is not easily attested but it seems that the work was delivered orally and that it has elements of pro-Christian *ethos* even though it is not to be seen as a serious contribution to any debate on religion.²¹ Tertullian writes that the reason behind the king's decision to change his clothes was *vis vanae* ("the power of vainglory"). The negative motive for the king's change of dress, *vana*, can be translated as vainglorious, ostentatious, boastful and vain. In the passage Tertullian does not call Alexander by name but terms him *magnus rex* ("the great king") yearning for *gloria* ("glory"). Tertullian writes about the paradoxical outcome of his change of dress, saying that "He [Alexander] had conquered the Median people and was conquered by Median attire. Abandoning his triumphal mail, he descended into the trousers of his captives."²²

The theme of Alexander as a conqueror who was himself conquered by the eastern ways was not the writer's own invention but derives from the Classical tradition. In the works of the Latin writers of the early empire, the king's change of dress was connected with disdain for the ways of *patria*. In Livy, Valerius Maximus and Curtius Rufus, the adoption of eastern attire was condemned since it was a mark of imitating inferior and degenerate barbarian ways and since it showed disrespect for the Macedonian traditions which were behind

19 Tert. *Apol.* 46.15: *Idem Aristoteles tam turpiter Alexandro regendo potius adolatur* (transl. Gerald H. Rendall).

20 Cf. Plut. *Alex.* 7.1–5. See further Peltonen forthcoming.

21 Hunink 2005, 16–17, 20–21.

22 Tert. *De pall.* 4.6.3: *Vicerat Medicam gentem et victus est Medica veste.* (transl. Hunink).

the king's success.²³ In contrast, Plutarch saw the change of dress as a king's tolerant and wise politics to win over his new eastern subjects.²⁴ Tertullian seems to follow the negative, Latin tradition of Alexander's orientalism. Tertullian's speech is about the writer's self-presentation where Tertullian underscores his own status as a learned sophist who not only knows Classical tradition but also can use it in order to support his argumentation before a learned audience.²⁵ Tertullian is implicitly claiming that the change of the dress he is propagating is not to be associated with that of Alexander. In other words Tertullian has not changed his outfit for wrong motives.

In *Against Marcion* (*Adversus Marcionem*), Tertullian writes about the use of the word "god" and nature of God as that of supreme greatness.²⁶ Even though the angels of God are described as gods in Bible, this does not prevent God himself from being supremely good and different to those creatures being styled as like gods. Tertullian reminds the reader that there are significant numbers of "worthless slaves" (*nequam servi*) likened unto kings, like Alexander, or Darius or Holofernes.²⁷ In the passage Tertullian writes that those "slaves" are bringing discredit on the name *rex*. The idea of calling kings slaves could be traced to the rhetoric of the Roman Latin Stoics. In Seneca's epistle, King Alexander is presented as a slave of his passions in a decidedly negative context.²⁸ Although, the reference to Alexander is here very short and not the main part of the passage clearly, the general reception of the king is negative. Alexander is not symbolizing the paradigm of the ideal monarch but one of its worst representatives. Here, Tertullian was not directing his words against rulers but hoping to show that Marcion was wrong. Similarly, Tertullian's reference to the king's change of dress was part of the argumentation. His reception of Alexander can be seen more in this general view of the pagan past. In none of the texts are the writer's own views about the king questioned as such.

23 Liv. 9.18.3; Val.Max. 9.5.1; Curt. 6.6.5.

24 Plut. *Alex.* 45.2. cf. also *Ar. An.* 7.29.4.

25 Cf. Vincent Hunink, *Tertullian De Pallio a Commentary* (J.C. Gieben Amsterdam, 2005), 23–24.

26 Tert. *Adv. Marci.* 1.7.1–3.

27 Tert. *Adv. Marci.* 1.7.2. Alexander is listed first, and Darius is referring to the Persian Darius either Darius I or III defeated by the Macedonians. Holofernes was the general of Nebuchadnezzar known from the apocryphal Book of Judith, and characterized as a tyrant killed famously by the Hebrew Judith.

28 Cf. Sen. *Ep.* 113.29–30. See also Sen. *Ep.* 94.60–67.

In Clement of Alexandria's (ca. 150 and 211–216 AD) *Exhortation to the Greeks* (*Protrepticus*) the tradition of Alexander's divinity is presented as a part of the critique of the traditional polytheistic religion:²⁹

Men who the folly of daemon-worshippers, who called Alexander a god are on the very verge of the pit through their folly and insanity, makers of idols and worshippers of stones. For these are they who have dared to deify men, describing Alexander of Macedon as the thirteenth god, though "Babylon proved him mortal".³⁰

Clement criticizes the polytheistic religion through stories of deified mortal men. Stories of Alexander's divinity or demanding divine honours were known in the ancient literature and its critics were launched against king's excessive actions or the disrespect of his Macedonian staff, but not against the polytheistic religion itself.³¹ Through this reference, Clement was trying to show the absurdity of traditional religion and to stress that the king who died suddenly in Babylon was not a true god. His passage was a direct critique of polytheistic religion, and choosing Alexander seems to be a fitting stratagem. Compared to the then contemporary Roman emperors and their divinity, the notorious divinity of Alexander offered a more neutral reference-point. In the era when Christians were not yet holding the supreme power in Roman society, the story of Alexander offered a sufficiently remote, but at the same time well-known, *exemplum*.

The early Christian apologetics adjusted the stories on Alexander to fit with their argumentative strategy. In the battle for cultural and religious prestige the old 'negative' tradition of Alexander offered material which could be used in these debates. In their reception of Alexander early Christian apologists followed the rhetoric of the Classical writers who propagated certain philosophical doctrines, or moral truths, by their references to a shared and known

29 Its main readership was educated and cultured pagans whom the work tried to turn towards the true λογος. Hubertus R. Drobner, *The Fathers of the Church—A Comprehensive Introduction*, (transl. Schatzmann, original German version *Lehrbuch der Patrologie*) (Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 133–134.

30 Clem. Al. *Prot.* 10.78: ἀνοίᾳ καὶ παρανοίᾳ ἐς αὐτὸ ὡθοῦμενοι τὸ βάραθρον, εἰδῶλων ποιηταὶ καὶ λίθων προσκυνηταί· οἶδε γὰρ ἀνθρώπους ἀποθεοῦν τετολμήκασιν, τρισκαιδέκατον Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν Μακεδῶνα ἀναγράφοντες θεόν, "ὃν Βαβυλῶν ἤλεγξε νεκρόν". (transl. P.G.W. Butterworth).

31 Cf. Ael. *VH.* 5.12. In Val. Max. 9.5.1 the critique is not addressed against the deification of mortals itself but king's disrespect towards his father Philip. In Curtius Rufus the critique of Alexander's deification is connected especially with king's disrespect of his Macedonian staff. cf. Curt. 4.7.31.

past. The language and the themes of the Classical writers were borrowed by the early Christian writers but the lessons that this material was expected to teach were different. Implicitly, by their references early Christian writers were preparing their audience for the *vera religio*, the alleged truth that Christian teaching and its virtues represent.

The Reproached Alexander of the Fourth Century Fathers

During the reign of Constantine (306–337), Christians achieved exceptional status in the Roman Empire as the ruling elites of society. Formerly persecuted Christians now operated in the Imperial court and received imperial posts, churches were built in public places and bishops received political prestige. Not surprisingly, the negative reception of Alexander did not disappear in the texts of the fourth and early fifth century Fathers. In Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 265–340AD), Augustine (354–430AD) and Orosius we can distinguish how the Christian writers of the fourth and early fifth century AD could praise the Christian present by the old ‘hostile’ reception of Alexander. In their works the critical image of the king, or the tradition of *comparatio Alexandri*, were connected with their present rhetorical interests and anti-pagan agenda.

Eusebius’ *Life of Constantine* (*Vita Constantini*) connects the negative presentation of Alexander through a *comparatio Alexandri*. Eusebius, who was Constantine’s contemporary, presents the Emperor as the idealized leader and ruler who was part of God’s plan for the salvation of the church. In the preface of the work, described as a mixture of panegyric and narrative history, Eusebius praises the Emperor by comparing Constantine to Cyrus, Alexander and Moses.³² The comparison with Cyrus is brief while the writer concentrates on the critical presentation of Alexander and on the eulogy of Constantine. After admitting that “sons of Greece” have written about Alexander’s deeds Eusebius remarks: “but before he [Alexander] reached full manhood he died an early death, carried off by revelry and drunken orgies.”³³ Like Tatian and Tertullian Eusebius is building up a negative portrait of Alexander. The king’s early death at less than 33 years old is connected with his moral failure. Alexander

32 Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 1, 7–9. The reference to Cyrus is the shortest. For the central role of Moses as scriptural exempla in the work, see Averil Cameron & Stuart Hall, *Life of Constantine, Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, (Clarendon Press, 1999), 9–11, 20–21, 35–39.

33 VC.1.7.1. θάπτον δ’ ἢ συντελέσαι εἰς ἀνδρας ὠκύμορον ἀποβῆναι, κώμοις ἀποληφθέντα καὶ μέθαις (transl. Averil Cameron & Stuart Hall).

is characterized as “a man like thunderbolt” who enslaved nations and cities but died childless, rootless and homeless in a hostile land.³⁴ In addition, his war-operations are presented as being harmful to the human race. The negative portrait of the king is linked with the idealistic portrait of the Emperor Constantine who surpassed Alexander in many ways:

But our Emperor began where the Macedonian ended, and doubled in time the length of his life, and trebled the size of the Empire he acquired. With mild and sober injunctions to godliness he equipped his troops.³⁵

Constantine reigned 30 years and died at age 65 (Alexander ruled his kingdom for only 13 years). Constantine was mild and sober, contrary to the impulsive Alexander whose reign brought destruction and disorder. Eusebius stresses this by writing that the emperor’s regime brought the “the light of true religion the ends of the whole inhabited earth”. While Alexander’s wars created global sufferings, Constantine’s wars have served the “right cause”.³⁶

This kind of *comparatio Alexandri* was a commonplace in the literature of the early Empire. Roman Latin writers especially compared Alexander to Roman generals.³⁷ In this discourse, Alexander’s morally inferior qualities served to emphasize the better qualities of Romans by contrast.³⁸ Eusebius seems to follow the structure of Tacitus’ *Annales*, where Tacitus compares Alexander with the Roman general Germanicus, by building juxtapositions. Germanicus is something that Alexander lacks; the Roman was “gentle to his friends, moderate in his pleasures, content with a single wife”, and therefore Germanicus was the greater soldier and statesman.³⁹ In addition, Eusebius’ passage should be regarded against the genre of imperial panegyrics that were popular in late antiquity, which used numerous historical *exempla* and *com-*

34 Ibid. 1.7.2.

35 VC. 8.1–2. ὁ δ’ ἡμέτερος βασιλεὺς ἐξ ἐκείνου μὲν ἤρχετο, {ἐξ} οὐπερ ὁ Μακεδὼν ἐτελεύτα, ἐδιπλασίαζε δὲ τῷ χρόνῳ τὴν ἐκείνου ζωὴν, τριπλάσιον δ’ ἐποιεῖτο τῆς βασιλείας τὸ μῆκος. ἡμέροις γέ τοι καὶ σώφροσι θεοσεβείας παραγγέλμασι τὸν αὐτοῦ φραζάμενος στρατὸν (transl. Averil Cameron & Stuart Hall).

36 VC.8.4. (transl. Averil Cameron & Stuart Hall).

37 For the *comparatio Alexandri* as a motif different than *imitatio Alexandri*, see Daniel Hengst, “Alexander and Rome”, in *Emperors and Historiography—Collected Essays on the Literature of the Roman Empire*, ed. Diederik Burgersdijk et al. Hengst (Brill, 2009), 69.

38 Vel. Pat. 2.41.1–2; Gell. N.A.7.8.1–5.

39 Tac. Ann. 2.73.

paratio.⁴⁰ There exists another contemporary text, a panegyric addressed to Constantine by an anonymous writer, comparing Alexander's wars with that of Constantine against Maxentius. This panegyric was written soon after the battle at the Milvian Bridge while Eusebius's work was composed after the death of Constantine. As in Eusebius, in that panegyric the emperor and his war are depicted as greater than the battles of Alexander which had, nevertheless, received great praise.⁴¹ For Eusebius the state of the Empire was the best possible and the position that Christians enjoyed should be extolled. By re-casting this image of the past, Eusebius was painting an image of the present as more cultivated and moral than the previous reigns of the pagan rulers.

In a similar way the 'hostile' representations of the king by Augustine, as with his pupil Orosius, were created to support the superior Christian order of the later Roman Empire. The need for these kinds of images of the pagan past became acute when Rome was sacked in 410 AD by the Goths of Alaric and Christians were blamed for the adversity.⁴² In this context, western Church fathers tried to assert that Christianity was not behind the problems in the state. In a famous passage of *De Civitate Dei* (*The City of God*) Augustine deals with the topic of righteousness in kingdoms and categorizes the kingdom of Alexander as composed of "bands of robbers" (*latrocinia*).⁴³ The concept itself and applying it to the reign of the Macedonian king seems not be the invention of Augustine himself but probably taken from Seneca's *Natural Questions*. In this work Seneca calls the kingdoms of Philip and Alexander as *latrocinia* famous of the destruction of the human race.⁴⁴

In a famous passage, Augustine connects this Senecan expression to an anecdote in which a captured pirate commander questions the regime and justice of Alexander's reign by describing the king as a grand pirate chieftain who happens to have armies at his command. In other words, Alexander was no

40 For the historical *exempla* in imperial panegyrics of the late antiquity, see C.E.V. Nixon, "The Use of the Past by the Gallic Panegyrists", in *Reading the Past in Late Antiquity*, eds. Clarke Graeme et al. (Pergamon press, 1990), 1–36.

C.E.V. Nixon, & Barbara Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini: Introduction, Translation and Historical Commentary* (University of California Press, 1994), 24.

41 Cf. *Pan. Lat.* XII. 5.1–3.

42 Robert Royal, *The God That Did Not Fail: How Religion Built and Sustains the West* (Encounter Books, 2006), 103–104.

43 August. *De. civ.* D.4.4. Further on this, see Brian Harding, "The Use of Alexander in Augustine's City of God", *Augustinian Studies* 39.1. (2008), 116–120.

44 Stoic Sen. *Q. Nat.* 2. pref. 5. See also Sen. *Q. Nat.* v. 18,10 & VI. 23.2–4.

better than the much hated pirates, merely terrorizing the nations of the world on grander scale. The anecdote was probably borrowed from the third book of Cicero's *De res publica* of which a considerable part is lost.⁴⁵ In Augustine the implicit reference to Roman history is stressed by the fact that in this fictitious conversation Alexander is called *imperator*, which we do not encounter in the earlier Classical tradition. Implicitly Augustine claims that also those Roman generals and emperors who were acting like Alexander were also to be seen as pirates terrorizing the inhabited world. In Augustine the critique of unjust regimes becomes a critique of the pagan past seen as representative of unjust rule.

Orosius' world history, the *History Against the Pagans*, presents a systematically grim picture of pagan history, including the reign of Alexander, as dominated by the unjust and destructive control of power. Orosius' account of Alexander's reign is the longest individual text amongst the early Christian literature. One aim of the work was to show how pagan world history was much more bloodthirsty than the civilized, Christian present. In Orosius, the reign of Alexander is depicted as a gory mess causing havoc for the whole inhabited world: "I will now put off for a short time the chronological account of Alexander's wars, or rather of the ills the world suffered because of them."⁴⁶ The main structure of the narrative is based on Justin's *Epitome of The Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*; however, Orosius account is much starker since it omits all of the potentially positive aspects of the reign of Alexander and gives worse motives for his action than can be read even in Trogus/Justin's account.⁴⁷ While Justin mentions the king's repentance after killing Cleitus, Orosius does not offer any mitigating circumstances but writes instead that Cleitus and Calisthenes were "shamefully" killed.⁴⁸ Similarly Orosius omits to report the act of mercy towards Darius mother, praised in the Classical tradition; but writes that Darius's mother and wife and even his little daughters were being held in

45 Cf. R.W. Dyson, *Augustine—The City of God Against the Pagans*, (Cambridge University Press 1998), xxiii, 148. Cf. George Cary, *The Medieval Alexander* (Cambridge University Press, 1956), 95–96.

46 Oros. 3.15.1: "cuis bella immo sub cuius bellis mundi mala ordine sequential suspend paulisper, ut in hoc loco pro convenientia temporum Romana subiciam." (transl. A.T. Fear).

47 A.T. Fear, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans—Translated with an introduction and notes*, (Liverpool University Press 2010), 15. Orosius draws the main events of Alexander's reign most likely from Justin (Justin 11.2.1–11.) and some passages are taken verbatim.

48 Oros. 3.18.8–11. In contrast to Justin, Orosius does not mention anything of repentance of Alexander after killing Cleitus.

“cruel captivity”.⁴⁹ When Orosius recounts how Alexander found the dead body of Darius he describes the order to have him buried in the tomb of his ancestors as only an “empty gesture of pity”.

In the work, Alexander’s campaign is depicted as the result of “insatiable fury” which motivated the king to start his destructive campaign against the Persian Empire.⁵⁰ The king is labelled with harsh nicknames such as “blood-stained warlord” and “enslaver of the East”.⁵¹ These epithets are more negative and provocative even when compared with Orosius’ critical treatments of Semiramis and Romulus.⁵² Although Orosius does not directly borrow the terms used in Seneca’s *On Clemency* and Lucan’s epic *On the Civil War*, the rhetoric itself seems to derive from these previously critical representations of the Macedonian king.⁵³ While in Seneca and Lucan the critique of Alexander was based on the Stoic worldview and anti-imperialism, in Orosius the criticism was based on the negative connotations attested to pagan history and pagan regimes, generally speaking.

The hostile reception of Alexander as the bloodthirsty and unjust tyrant shows how the fourth century fathers borrowed the critical portraits of Classical literature. The harshly rhetorical attacks against the fame of Alexander was not the invention of Christian writers who followed the lines of rhetoric once used in the Latin literary tradition. The same anecdotes, literary motifs and phrases were recycled but the target of the critical portrait of Alexander was different. In this representation, Alexander was a pagan king symbolizing pagan culture and its prestige, which the Christian writers wanted to prove as a secondary and inferior.

Imitatio Alexandri and the Positive Image of Alexander

The following section suggests that the critical portrait of Alexander deriving from the classical literature was not the norm for the early Christian imagination of Alexander. The positive portrait of the king presented as a good monarch, previously stressed in the Greek and Roman texts, can be found

49 Ibid. 3.17.7. Orosius’ main source Justin (Just. 11.15.) had depicted that the king acted chivalrously toward the Darius family.

50 Oros. 3.16.12.

51 Ibid. 3.20.8. Nicknames remind us from the epithets attested by Seneca and Lucan in the previous Latin literature.

52 On Semiramis see Oros. 1.4.4–7 and on Romulus 2.4.2–7.

53 Cf. Sen. *Clem.* 1. 25.1; Luc. 10. 35.

within the works of many early Christian writers. For example Jerome wrote about his relationship with Alexander and Scipio:

And furthermore, I had the desire to imitate the deeds which I had read about in Alexander and Scipio; not because they had related their own adventures, but because I read about their deeds in the works of others and I admired them for such deeds.⁵⁴

Here Jerome explicitly refers to the fact that he had read about the campaigns of Alexander. He describes them as *gesta* ("adventures" or "deeds"), which is far from the Senecan rhetoric appearing in Tatian, Eusebius, Augustine and Orosius. In addition, Jerome writes about his desire to imitate Alexander's and Scipio's deeds and about his admiration. Even though the passage is part of the author's intention to show his knowledge of Classical tradition, works of Plato and Pythagoras, it indicates that the early Christian writers knew and even shared positive views about Alexander and his campaigns.

In the Roman world, the *imitatio Alexandri* was a widely known cultural phenomena. Hellenistic kings, Roman warlords and emperors were famous for their desire for imitating the Macedonian, or at least using the images of the king for their own political ends.⁵⁵ Jerome is far from the only early Christian writer referring to *imitatio Alexandri* and writing about Alexander as a positive example. Even in several letters of the Eastern Church Fathers the Macedonian king was used as a positive *exemplum*. In his letter to Sophronius, who was *Magister officium* (Master of the offices), Basil of Caesarea (330–379 AD) refers to the positive tradition on Alexander and his physician Philip. According to the story, popular in the Classical tradition, the king decided to trust in

54 Jer. C. Ruf. 3. 40: *Et rursum, imitari volui gesta quae in Alexandro et Scipione legeram: non quod ipsa sua gesta descripserint, sed quod apud alios legerim, quae illos gessisse mirabar.* (transl. John N. Hritzu).

55 Cf. Jacob Isager, "Alexander the Great in Roman Literature from Pompey to Vespasian", in *Alexander the Great—Reality and Myth*, ed. Jesper Carlsen, (ANALECTA ROMANA INSTITUTI DANICI Supplementum XX, 1992), 75–85. Alexander Meeus, "Alexander's Image in the Age of the Successors", in *Alexander the Great: A New History*, ed. Waldemar Heckel et al. (Chichester: Blackwell, 2009), 235–250; see Daniel Hengst, "Alexander and Rome", in *Emperors and Historiography—Collected Essays on the Literature of the Roman Empire* ed. Diederik Burgersdijk et al. Hengst (Brill, 2009), 68–84. Diana Spencer, *The Roman Alexander* (University of Exeter Press, 2002), 15–31. Diana Spencer, "Roman Alexanders: Epistemology and Identity", in *Alexander the Great: A New History*, ed. Waldemar Heckel et al. (Chichester: Blackwell, 2009), 253–267.

his physician who had been accused of treachery.⁵⁶ According to the story, Alexander recovered since he did not believe the accusations but drank the medicine (which was not poison, as was alleged) that Philip had prepared. In Basil, this story is recycled to serve his own rhetorical strategy. Basil requests Sophronius to imitate Alexander and to consider all the accusations against him as false.⁵⁷ In the letter Basil uses historical *exemplum* as a proof for his own innocence by comparing the present situation to the famous encounter of Alexander and his physician. As the accusations against the physician Philip were false, so were the accusations put against Basil's loyalty. In Basil, another letter addressed to Athanasius, the bishop of Ancyra, *imitatio Alexandri* is introduced again hortatively: "But though we do certainly hear them [slanders], whatever else we do, we shall at any rate follow the example of Alexander, and keep one ear untainted for the accused".⁵⁸ In this passage, Basil writes about *imitatio Alexandri* as something which he wants share with his addressee. We know the anecdote of the king keeping one ear clear for the accused from Plutarch.⁵⁹ *Imitatio Alexandri* could be used to manifest and convince one's loyalty and respect both ways—as a formula suggested for the addressee, or action adopted by the writer himself. Interestingly, this phenomena appears in the correspondence of two bishops which tells that also pagan individuals could be part of the moral models of the Christians.

Also, the younger brother of Basil and bishop, Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 330–395AD), exploits the positive tradition of Alexander in a letter of recommendation to his friend Antiochus. Gregory introduces Alexander in his letter as a prototype of ideal friendship. According to Gregory, wise men do not primarily admire the king because of his victories over the Persians and Indians, but "for his saying that his treasure was in his friends".⁶⁰ The saying occurs in the Classical tradition where the king's relationship with his companions (like his physician Philip, or Hephaestion) are praised.⁶¹ Implicitly, Gregory is placing himself among the group of "wise" (σοφός) men who give credit also to Alexander's qualities other than his martial prowess.

56 Curt. 3.6.1–17; Diod. 17.31.4–6. Arr. *An.* 2.4.8–11. Plut. 19.4–10. Just. 11.8.3–6.

57 Basil. *Epist.* 2.272.

58 Basil *Epist.* 1.24: ἀκούοντες δὲ πάντως, εἰ μή τι ἄλλο, τὸ γοῦν τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου ποιήσομεν, τὴν ἑτέραν τῶν ἀκοῶν ἀκεραίαν ταμειυσόμεθα τῷ διαβαλλομένῳ (transl. J. Deferrari).

59 Plut. *Alex* 42.2. Also Basil's letter to Elias (governor of Cappadocia) uses similarly the same anecdote Basil. *Epist.* 2.94.

60 Greg. Nyssa. *Epist.* 8.1.5: εἰπεῖν τὸν θησαυρὸν ἐν τοῖς φίλοις ἔχειν (transl. Anna M. Silvas).

61 For the saying in the other writers see also Ammian. Marc. 25.4.15; Simplic. *Comm. in Epictet. enchir.* 88,19.

Gregory writes about those who admire Alexander in a positive way and calls Alexander's achievements marvels (θαῦμα). In addition he even connects himself implicitly amongst that group. Interestingly, Gregory claims that his own exploits are as marvellous as Alexander's deeds adding that he possibly surpasses Alexander in being "rich in friendships" (πλουτῶ τῇ φιλίᾳ). These favouring references to Alexander in the letter are part of Gregory's self-promotion when he requests his addressee Antiochus to become a patron of his servant who was also a namesake of the Macedonian king.⁶² Antiochus was probably not Christian and accustomed to exercise patronage; by referring to the stories of Alexander, Gregory was intending to appeal to his addressee to act in a desired way.⁶³ This compares well with Jerome, for example, who refers to the relationship between Alexander and Aristotle as ideal. In contrast to Tatian and Tertullian, the education of the young Alexander was not a total failure. Jerome writes that Laeta should choose a master like Aristotle who sent letters to his pupil even when he was abroad and built warm relation with Alexander.⁶⁴ The way Jerome uses the anecdote seems to be following Quintilian.⁶⁵

Basil of Caesarea, in his *Address to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature*, writes about Alexander's relationship with Darius' daughters as a positive example for his audience.⁶⁶ In Basil, "the conqueror of men" did not want to be a slave to women. Basil admits that these Persian women were extremely beautiful but Alexander did not think it fitting even to look upon them. In the Classical tradition, the praise of Alexander's self-possession towards Persian captive women was a commonplace.⁶⁷ In Plutarch the anecdote was stressing the value of self-control (σωφροσύνη) and the king's Greek education which made him able to actualize this virtue.⁶⁸ In Basil, this story of a king showing self-control towards sex received a new meaning. In Basil's rhetoric, Alexander's conduct is affirming the truth of Jesus' instructions.⁶⁹ Alexander, a pagan king, was able to show such a beautiful self-restraint, which was in accordance with Christ's teachings, which could offer an imitable example for Basil's Chris-

62 Greg. Nyss. *Epist.* 8.1.

63 Anna M. Silva, *Gregory Of Nyssa: The Letters—Introduction, Commentary and Translation* (Brill, 2006), 144.

64 Jer. *Epist.* 107.4.7.

65 Cf. Quint. *Inst.* 1.23–24.

66 Basil. *Ad. adolesc.* 7.9.

67 We encounter the incident in several Classical authors see Plut. *Alex.* 21.4–5. See also *Mor.* 338.d–e., Ar. *An.* 2.12.7–8. Gell. *N.A.* 7.8.1–5.

68 Cf. Plut. *Alex.* 21.4–5. See also *Mor.* 338.d–e.

69 For the biblical statement cf. Matthew 5.28.

tian readers. *Imitatio Alexandri* was therefore implicitly attested in the passage. It was essential that Basil's Christian audience would interpret the Classical material properly and subordinate it to Christian doctrine.

In the early Christian reception of Alexander there was room for a pagan king who was able to behave virtuously toward his friends. Our source material gives us information on the popularity of *imitatio Alexandri* which did not appear only on the actions of the Roman warlords but even in the correspondences of bishops. In addition to *imitatio Christi*, early Christians could follow other famous men, even pagans to a lesser extent at least within literary culture. The status of Alexander was especially strong in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, the Hellenized East, which could explain why Alexander appears as a positive example especially in the works of the Eastern Church fathers. However, this is not an all-encompassing explanation since writers like Tatian who came from the east could also exploit the negative portrait of the king. More likely, early Christian writers knew several Classical traditions and chose certain ways to write about the king, or anecdotes (either negative or positive) when it suited their literary, and rhetorical aims.

Jewish Alexander and the King's Visit to Jerusalem

There were several Jewish traditions concerning Alexander, and one of the earliest is documented in the First book of the Maccabees, initially written in Hebrew and then translated to Greek. This work from the latter part of second century BC, depicts the king as a foreign conqueror whose successors, the Seleucids, brought in a repressive regime which gave birth to the Maccabean revolt. This Maccabean critical picture of Alexander clearly made an impact on subsequently negative portrayals of Alexander.⁷⁰ However, a different tradition of Alexander can be read from the book of Daniel which depicts the king's illustrious career as part of the divine biblical prophecy.⁷¹ In addition to his alleged role cryptically outlined in the book of Daniel, Jewish tradition of Alex-

70 1 Macc. 1.1–10: "He advanced to the ends of the earth, gathering plunder from many nations; the earth fell silent before him, and his heart became proud and arrogant" (καὶ διήλθεν ἕως ἄκρων τῆς γῆς καὶ ἔλαβεν σκύλα πλῆθους ἐθνῶν. καὶ ἡσύχασεν ἡ γῆ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὑψώθη, καὶ ἐπήρθη ἡ καρδία αὐτοῦ). Transl. Daniel J. Harrington. This passage undoubtedly is accordance with the critical tones of Eusebius and Orosius.

71 Even though, Alexander is not mentioned by name in the book of Daniel, several part of the Danielic visions were seen referring to Alexander in the Jewish and Christian thought, see below.

ander's visit to Jerusalem also became popular in the early Christian reception. I will concentrate on these two stories that were both used in the early literature.⁷²

For the early Christian writers the book of Daniel was well-known since it belonged to the canon of the Old Testament.⁷³ In addition, its prophecies became part of the theological debate when anti-Christian writers, like Porphyry, questioned the authenticity of Daniel's prophecies.⁷⁴ Like Jews, also the early Christians viewed the book of Daniel as the work of a real Prophet who lived in the times of Babylonia and Persia and not a piece of later composition.⁷⁵ In the book of Daniel, Alexander (like the other rulers or kingdoms mentioned in the visions) is not called by name but by interpretative, metaphorical and symbolical language. In the early Christian reception of Daniel, Alexander appears in four different visions: in the statue designed from different metals, being one of the four beasts, a four-winged leopard and representing the victorious and suddenly vanished he-goat and finally as one king in the apocalyptic struggle between the 'Southern' and 'Northern' kings.⁷⁶

This image of the Danielic Alexander was adopted widely by the early Christian writers.⁷⁷ According to their view, Alexander was not only a brutal pagan king depicted in the first book of the Maccabees, or Roman Latin Stoic writers, but also a king whose success was part of God's plans as revealed through

72 For the early Jewish traditions, and their impact to the medieval Alexander, see Saskia Dönitz, "Alexander the Great in Medieval Hebrew Traditions", in *Brill's Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages* ed. David Z. Zuwiya, (Brill, 2011), 21–26; George Cary, *The Medieval Alexander* (Cambridge University Press, 1956), 18.

73 For the reception of the book of Daniel, see Europa K. Koch, *Rom und der Kaiser vor dem Hintergrund von zwei Rezeption des buches des Daniel*, (Berichte aus den Sitzungen der Joachim-Jungius-Gesellschaft der wissenschaften e.V Hamburg 15; Göttingen, 1997).

74 For Porphyry's critics on Daniel, see esp. Timothy D. Barnes, "Porphyry against the Christians: Date and the Attribution of Fragments", *Journal of Theological Studies*, 24, (1974): 424–442. P.M. Casey, "Porphyry and the Origin of the Book of Daniel", *Journal of Theological Studies*, 27, (1976): 15–33.

75 Cf. Joseph. AJ. 10.273–274; Ibid. 11.337, and Mathew 24.15; Mark 13.14. From the early 20th century on scholars mostly date the book of Daniel to be composed in the early Maccabean era, and view it as imaginative tales and visions that reflect the fears and hopes of the Jews in the Hellenistic era. cf. John J. Collins, "Current Issues of the Study of Daniel", in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, Vol. 1, ed. John J. Collins et al. (Brill Leiden. 2001), 1–2.

76 Daniel 2:39; 7:6, 8:3–8, 20–22; 11:3–4.

77 See the opening quote Jer. Vita. Hil. Pref. 9–11; Origen. Phil. 23.4–5; Chryst. Hom. v. 7.1–5.

prophetic predictions. The two commentaries of Daniel written by Hippolytus (170–236 AD) and Jerome give us a good insight into Alexander's position in the Danielic prophecies and their Christian interpretations. They agreed on which parts of Daniel's verses were referring to Alexander. The longest passage of explanation appears when Jerome comes to the seventh chapter of the book of Daniel. Jerome explains to his audience that Alexander was compared to leopard because of its shiftiness and impetuosity and its tactic of charging headlong and kill its enemy in a single bound.⁷⁸ In the same passage Jerome writes about Alexander's vast conquests in so short a period of time, which are meant to show the exactness of the prophecy. In other words a positive reception of Alexander's wars is seen as proof positive of the truthfulness of the Bible itself. The most important aspect concerning the prophesied Alexander (as in the case of every other prophecy) however was about declaring the glory of God. Jerome states that the reason for Alexander's remarkable accomplishments was "Not from the bravery of Alexander but from the will of God."⁷⁹ In the Judeo-Christian context the great achievements and popularity of the Macedonian king were subordinated to the Christian project. The Danielic reception of Alexander was praising Christianity and God himself.

In John Chrysostom's (ca. 345–407 AD) *Homilies on 1. Thessalonians (1–11)* this Danielic reception of Alexander forms part of the overall argumentation. It shows that early Christian writers could refer to the Danielic Alexander also in other contexts than when they were writing commentaries on Biblical books. Chrysostom starts his sermon by referring to Paul's praise of the congregation in Thessalonica, whose strong faith had become well-known in Macedonia and Achaia.⁸⁰ Chrysostom remarks that this statement is not an exaggeration and refers to the fame of the Macedonian nation and its renowned past. He reminds the reader how the actions of the Macedonian king acquired such praise by coming from a small city and subduing the world with a reference to Daniel as the "Prophet saw him, a winged leopard, showing his swiftness, his vehemence, his fiery nature, his suddenly in a manner flying over the whole world with the trophies of his victory."⁸¹ Here, John Chrysostom is using the legacy of

78 Ibid. 666. a. Hippolytus draws these same similarities between the kingdom of the Greeks whose king was Alexander and leopard. A leopard, animal many-coloured in appearance is symbolizing the quick and inventive qualities in thought, and their character as bitter in heart.

79 Jer. *Comment. in. Dan.* 666.a: *Non Alexandri fortitudinis, sed domini voluntatis fuisse.* (transl. Gleason L. Archer).

80 1. Thessalonians. 1.6–7.

81 John. Chrys. *In 1. Thess. hom.* 62.399.45–48: Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ πτηγὴν Πάρδαλιν αὐτὸν ὀρᾷ ὁ

Alexander as a proof for the Biblical statement. At the same time he is trying to appeal his audience's feelings, to encourage them to continue on the remarkable achievements of their (both Christian and non-Christian) predecessors. The prophesied king is used as a model for fellow-Christians living in the Thessalonica. The Danielic Alexander was especially symbolizing the truthfulness of the Biblical visions and God's actions in the past and present. In the battle over new converts and convincing any Christians who were "being weak" in faith, the Danielic Alexander could deliver a strong point of argument. The career of Alexander, positively interpreted as God's will, showed that Christianity and its holy books were the truth. Christian theologians in antiquity could use the prophetic example of Alexander whenever they felt it appropriate.

Josephus was an important source for the Christian writers of antiquity and the Middle Ages, especially because he depicted the Biblical past which the Christians adopted as part of their own shared history.⁸² When it comes to Alexander in Josephus, the tradition of king's visit to Jerusalem was well-known.⁸³ The story of the visit appears also in other Jewish sources like the Jewish version of the *Alexander Romance* and in the rabbinic literature.⁸⁴ According to the story, Alexander visited Jerusalem and even venerated the Jewish high priest, entered the Temple and let the Jewish people keep their privileges. The outcome was miraculous and part of God's way to deliver his chosen people from severe threat arranged by their enemies, similar to how God had protected his people in the Biblical past.

Naturally, the tradition of the visit itself had religious and ideological messages amongst the Jews. In Josephus and other Jewish literary traditions, it was used to construct a sense of Jewish identity and to present its past as a grand story of the Jews as the people of almighty God.⁸⁵ Interestingly, early Christian writers wrote about the visit and placed it as part of their cultural identity. Ori-

προφήτης, τὸ τάχος καὶ τὸ σφοδρὸν καὶ τὸ πυρώδες καὶ τὸ ἄφνω που διαπτῆναι τὴν οἰκουμένην μετὰ τροπαίων καὶ νίκης δηλῶν (transl. Philip Schaff).

- 82 For the reasons for Josephus popularity among the Christian writers, see Louis H. Feldman, "Origen's 'Contra Celsum' and Josephus' 'Contra Apionem': The Issue of Jewish Origins", *Vigiliae Christianae*, Vol. 44, No. 2. (1990): 105; Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition in Antike und Mittelalter* (Leiden Brill, 1972).
- 83 Joseph. AJ. 11.306–345.
- 84 Alex. Rom. 2.24. For the visit In Rabbinic literature, see Amram Tropper, *Simeon the Righteous in Rabbinic Literature: A Legend Reinvented* (Brill, 2013), 136–156.
- 85 Erich S. Gruen, "Cultural Fictions and Cultural Identity", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* Vol. 123. (1993): 11.

gen's (184/185–253/254AD) *Against Celsus* and Augustine's *The City of God* both portray this alleged visit and are the longest extant, early Christian references to the story.⁸⁶ Both of these Christian texts try to convey that Christians enjoy God's favour in the present, even if the meaning of Alexander's visit is presented differently.

In Origen, Alexander's visit is one form of proof that God favoured the Jewish people of that time. Origen mentions that Alexander did obeisance before the high priest and saw a divine vision like those found in Jewish tradition. However, in the reception of Origen, the visit is linked to the Christian past and present. According to Origen the status of being favoured by God and enjoying his protection had turned to Christians. The Jews' miraculous salvation in the time of Alexander was part of the grand narrative of Christianity. The story of God ensuring that Alexander did not harm the Jews, and that he did protect the Temple, preceded God's protection of Christians under the persecutions undertaken by later Roman officials.

By contrast, Augustine's portrait downplays the religious meaning of Alexander's decision to spare the Temple and to offer sacrifices in it. His portrait deliberately seeks to remove any 'holy' connotations of the visit that exists in the accounts of Josephus or Origen. Firstly, Augustine wants to prove that Alexander did not spare the Temple due to godly protection but because the Jews did not "dare to resist him".⁸⁷ In addition, Augustine admits that the king made sacrifices in the Temple, however the king's action was not motivated by *vera pietate* but *impia vanitate*. Augustine comments that Alexander was only attaching one god to his pantheon, not converting or confessing the position of the one true God among other insignificant, false ones. By these remarks he intends to reject the view that Alexander showed special religious respect towards the true God. This representation, reminiscent of that of Alexander as a 'hopped-up' pirate chieftain in the *City of God*, can be linked to a more negative view of king's reign and actions.

Augustine's portrait of the visit seems to be more of an exception than a rule in the way that Christians depicted the visit in antiquity and in the Middle Ages. Mostly, the story in the Christian tradition was presented with positive

86 Origen, *C. Cels* 5.50.9–14; August. *De civ.* 18.45.

87 August. *De civ.* 18.45: *Non multo post enim adveniente Alexandro subiugata est, quando etsi nulla est facta vastatio, quoniam non sunt ei ausi resistere et ideo placatum facillime subditi receperunt, non erat tamen gloria tanta domus illius quanta fuit in suorum regum liberapotentate. Hostias sane Alexander immolavit in Dei templo, non ad eius cultum vera pietate conversus, sed impia vanitate cum diis eum falsis colendum putans.*

connotations.⁸⁸ The reception of Alexander as a pagan king who unknowingly turned to act like the Almighty wanted, and who carried out God's will, was definitely an essential part of the Christian reception of Alexander. This image derived from Jewish thought and found its support in the texts of the early Christian writers. The role of Alexander in the book of Daniel and the tradition of his visit to Jerusalem was part of a positive tradition which was naturally a major factor in making the king so popular in later Christian literature.⁸⁹ In that tradition, King Alexander was even more Christianized when Biblical themes like Gog and Magog and the unclean nations were connected with him praying to the one true God.⁹⁰

Conclusions

The many and varied roles of Alexander illustrate the flexibility of the myths and stories about him. In antiquity, there was not only one Christian reception of Alexander but multiple. As in the Classical tradition, the Macedonian king could be presented both as a bad and a good ruler whose character was sometimes to be praised, sometimes to be condemned. All of the literary traditions from *comparatio*, *imitatio Alexandri* to the Roman Stoic representations were part of the Christian imagining of Alexander, or rather of thinking with *exempla* of Alexander adjusted to fit their own ends. Christian writers knew the literary culture and followed it when they composed their works for their contemporary audience.

In addition to the Classical Latin material, Jewish traditions also contributed to the early Christian reception of Alexander. The Danielic Alexander and the

88 Cf. Jer. *Comment. in. Dan.* 635; Jer. *Chron.* 204.4–5; Isid. *Chron.* 50.

89 Another reason for Alexander's popularity in the later literature was naturally the massive and extremely popular *Alexander Romance* tradition. The first known Christian work that exploited Alexander Romance tradition is Fulgentius' passage of Alexander. Richard Stoneman, *Alexander the Great: a Life in Legend* (Yale University Press, 2008), 201. Richard Stoneman "Introduction: The Latin Base Texts for Medieval Alexander Literature", in *Brill's Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages* ed. Zuwiya, Z. David (Brill 2011), 13.

90 Cf. Ps. Methodius. 8.3–10 (seventh century AD). Emeri Donzel & Andrea Schmidt, *Gog and Magog in Early Eastern Christian and Islamic Sources: Sallam's Quest for Alexander's Wall*, (Brill 2009), 28–31. According to Richard Stoneman, *Alexander the Great: a Life in Legend* (Yale University Press, 2008), 174 this theme of unclean nations was the main vehicle for the insertion of Alexander into the sacred history of the Christian world. However, one could claim that Alexander's career was first introduced to the sacred history of the Christians by his supposed role in Daniel's prophecies.

Jewish traditions of the king's friendly visit to Jerusalem offered radically different ways to re-evaluate his famous reign. Since Christian writers adopted the Jewish reception of Alexander, it made him in some sense 'our' king, whose career was predicted by the prophets and undertaken through God's will. However, although the Church fathers followed the vocabulary and language of the Classical and Jewish writers, their own rhetorical intentions gave new meanings to the old portraits of Alexander. In the Christian world-histories, letters and sermons the career of the king was subordinated in service to the Christian present and its new truths.

The early Christian passages concerning Alexander himself were not only meant to be characterizations of the king; they clearly had certain specific rhetorical agendas behind them. We cannot usually (or it is very challenging to) trace how the separate early Christian writers' thought about Alexander since they were not primarily airing their 'own' opinions about him. Rather, we can distinguish a possible range of patterns of thought about Alexander. Undoubtedly for the Christian writers, Alexander could mean several things. He was both a pagan monarch whose wars brought human suffering to cities and ancient peoples and, at the same time, a tolerant king whose unexpected military success was a living testament to, and proof positive of, the veracity of God's divine plan. Yet both of these images served to construct Christian identity, seeing themselves as a group chosen by almighty God whose morals were superior to those of the pagan, Classical culture and its erstwhile heroes.

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Medieval and Renaissance Italian Receptions of the *Alexander Romance* Tradition

Barbara Blythe

Legends telling of Alexander the Great's encounters with exotic beasts, strange races of humans, and other wondrous marvels, some based loosely on historical events and others complete fabrications, seem to have begun circulating immediately after his death. These legends laid a foundation for the Greek *Alexander Romance*, which was falsely attributed to Alexander's court historian Callisthenes. Richard Stoneman suggests that the Greek *Alexander Romance* was written down in a form similar to that which we now possess around the third century BCE, though the earliest extant manuscript dates to the third century CE.¹

The Greek *Alexander Romance* existed in several versions, and at some point in the early fourth century CE, Julius Valerius translated one of these versions, known as the alpha recension, into Latin.² More important for our purposes is a translation into Latin made by Leo, the Archpriest of Naples, in approximately 950 CE. Leo produced this translation as a commission for Duke John of Naples, after he brought back a copy of a version of the Greek *Alexander Romance* from Constantinople. Leo's prologue to his translation survives in the Bamberg manuscript of the *Historia de Preliis*, which seems to have been produced

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- 1 For the Greek *Alexander Romance* and its composition, see Richard Stoneman, "Primary Sources from the Classical and Early Medieval Periods", in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Z. David Zuwiyya (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 1–10, Richard Stoneman, trans., *The Greek Alexander Romance* (London: Penguin, 1991), 1–23, Dennis M. Kratz, trans., *The Romances of Alexander* (New York: Garland, 1991), xi–xvii, David J.A. Ross, *Alexander Historiatus, A Guide to Medieval Illustrated Alexander Literature* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1988), 5–6, and George Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, ed. David J.A. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 9–12.
 - 2 For Julius Valerius' Latin translation, see Stoneman, "Primary Sources", 6, Richard Stoneman, *Alexander the Great, A Life in Legend* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 236, Roberta Morosini, "The Alexander Romance in Italy", in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Z. David Zuwiyya (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 330, Kratz, *Romances*, xvii, Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 9, and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 24.

around 1000 CE in southern Italy. In the preface, Leo tells us that one of his goals in producing the translation was to offer examples of the noble deeds of virtuous pagans in order to motivate Christians to pursue greater virtue. Leo seems to have abbreviated his source text severely and his command of Latin is less than perfect.³

Leo's translation was reworked into the *Historia de Preliis* (henceforth *HP*). The anonymous author of this text expanded Leo's translation, added some passages from other Alexander texts (including the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, a fictional letter from Alexander to Aristotle describing the wonders of India, and the *Collatio Alexandri cum Dindimo*, which offers fictional correspondence between Alexander and the king of the Gymnosophists), and improved Leo's Latinity.⁴ There are three recensions of the *HP*. *J*¹ is the original text and *J*² and *J*³ were later adapted from it. *J*², which dates to around the second half of the twelfth century, was used occasionally in Italy, but *J*³ was by far the most popular recension in Italy and may in fact have originated there. *J*³ cannot have been composed later than 1236, when Quilichinus of Spoleto completed a poem based upon it. The recension is distinguished by the frequent addition of moralizing passages and a prologue that explains the didactic purpose of the text as a source of moral instruction. It is possible that the author was Jewish.

Significant episodes in the *HP* include the Egyptian Nectanebus' fathering of Alexander (and eventual murder at his son's hands), Alexander's ascent into the sky in a basket carried by griffons, and his descent to the bottom of the sea inside a glass vessel.⁵ Also significant are Alexander's encounters with the

3 For more on Leo's translation and the various recensions of the *HP*, see Stoneman, "Primary Sources", 17–19, Stoneman, *A Life in Legend*, 237, Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 329–330, 338–339, Kratz, *Romances*, xviii–xxix, Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 47–48, 50–54, 61, and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 11, 38, 43–44, 52. Editions of the *HP*: H.J. Bergmeister, ed., *Die Historia de preliis Alexandri Magni (Der lateinische Alexanderroman des Mittelalters): synoptische Edition der Rezensionen des Leo Archipresbyter und der interpolierten Fassungen J¹, J², J³* (Meisenheim am Glan: A. Hain, 1975) and Friedrich Pfister, ed., *Der Alexanderroman des Archipresbyters Leo* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1913).

4 For the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* and the *Collatio Alexandri cum Dindimo*, see Stoneman, "Primary Sources", 14–15, Richard Stoneman, trans., *Legends of Alexander the Great* (London: J.M. Dent, 1994), xviii–xix, xxii, Kratz, *Romances*, xxix–xxxii, and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 13–16.

5 For Alexander's celestial journey and descent to the bottom of the sea, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 329, 332–335, 347–349, Victor M. Schmidt, *A Legend and its Image: the Aerial Flight of Alexander the Great in Medieval Art* (Groningen: E. Forsten, 1995), David J.A. Ross, *Alexander and the Faithless Lady: a Submarine Adventure* (London: Birkbeck College, 1967),

Unclean Nations of Gog and Magog, the Amazons, the Indian Gymnosophists, a basilisk, and the speaking trees of the sun and moon that issue prophecies.⁶ The *HP* was the foundation of the Italian Alexander tradition, yet legendary material seems to have started percolating into Italy at around the same time from other sources as well. An anonymous “Geographer of Ravenna”, for example, mentions his familiarity with a “book of Alexander” while discussing the search for Earthly Paradise. It is unclear when exactly he wrote (probably during the tenth century) or what Alexander book he is referencing, though it is likely a version of either Julius Valerius’ text or the *HP*. It is also possible, as Roberta Morosini suggests, that he had read both texts.⁷ Some important legendary episodes derive from other sources, such as the *Iter ad Paradisum* (which includes the story of the Wonderstone, an impossibly heavy stone given to Alexander that can only be outweighed by dust).⁸ As such, when an episode is mentioned as being part of the legendary Alexander tradition in Italy, it can usually be traced back to at least one recension of the *HP*, but may derive from a different source altogether. The *HP* was translated into a diverse array of languages and spawned countless adaptations during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, though we will focus on the Italian tradition specifically.

The Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, façades, misericords, and mosaics featuring scenes from Alexander’s celestial flight with his basket drawn by griffins began to appear in some Italian churches, particularly cathedrals in Apulia.⁹ A mosaic that was completed between 1163 and 1165 on the floor of the cathedral

A. Warburg, “Aeronave e sommergibile nella immaginazione medievale”, in *La rinascita del paganesimo antico. Contributi alla storia della cultura*, ed. G. Bing (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1966), 273–282, and G. Boffito, “La leggenda aviatoria di Alessandro Magno nella letteratura e nell’arte”, *La Bibliofilia* 22 (1920–1921): 316–330.

6 For more on the prophetic trees, see M. Casari, “Alexandre et l’arbre anthropique”, in *L’arbre anthropogène du waqwaq, les femmes-fruits et les îles des femmes*, ed. J.L. Bacqué-Grammont (Naples: Università degli Studi di Napoli, 2007), 176–201.

7 For the “Geographer of Ravenna”, see Morosini, “Alexander Romance”, 330–331.

8 For more on the *Iter ad Paradisum*, see Stoneman, “Primary Sources”, 20, Stoneman, *Legends of Alexander the Great*, xxii–xxiii, Kratz, *Romances*, xxxii–xxxiv, Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 35–36, and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 19–21.

9 For the general motif in European churches, see Thomas Noll, “The Visual Image of Alexander the Great: Transformations from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period”, in *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages, Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. Markus Stock (Toronto: University

of Otranto, in Apulia, shows Alexander holding out baited sticks to two griffins, alongside an inscription reading “ALEXANDER REX”. A roughly contemporaneous mosaic in the cathedral of Trani, also in Apulia, depicts Alexander in the same pose with his griffins and includes the same inscription. A late twelfth or early thirteenth century pediment at the church of Santa Maria della Strada, in Matrice, near Apulia, depicts a similar scene in relief, juxtaposed with a representation of the Lamb of God. A capital dated to the thirteenth century, in the cathedral of Apulian Bitonto, offers a slightly different depiction. Alexander is shown in the standard pose, wearing a crown and showing the baited sticks to the griffons, yet he is then depicted returning back downward to earth, having lost his crown. While most medieval churches with representations of Alexander’s celestial flight are in Apulia, there are some outside of the region as well, for example, an eleventh century relief on the façade of St. Mark’s Basilica in Venice.¹⁰

The symbolic meaning behind the use of Alexander’s celestial journey as a decorative motif in medieval Italian churches is unclear. The ascent clearly symbolizes the sin of prideful ambition in German churches, yet the significance seems more ambiguous in Italian religious contexts. Thomas Noll argues that the depiction of Alexander’s flight on the south pediment of the church of Santa Maria della Strada should be interpreted in a positive sense, combined as it is with a representation of the Lamb of God, as symbolic of the ascent of the soul toward God. Yet the capital in the cathedral of Bitonto, with its representation of Alexander hurtling back toward earth without his crown, having failed in his quest, invites a negative interpretation, as Morosini suggests. The depiction of Alexander’s celestial journey in the mosaic in the cathedral of Trani likewise seems to suggest prideful ambition, juxtaposed as it is with an image of

of Toronto Press, 2016), 247, Morosini, “Alexander Romance”, 332–335, Stoneman, *A Life in Legend*, 210, Schmidt, *Aerial Flight*, Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 134–135, and Boffito, “La leggenda aviatoria”, 316–330.

10 On the Otranto mosaic, see Morosini, “Alexander Romance”, 329, 332 and Chiara Settis Frugoni, “Per una lettura del mosaico pavimentale della cattedrale di Otranto”, *Bullettino dell’Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medioevo* 80 (1968): 213–256. On the Trani mosaic, see Morosini, “Alexander Romance”, 332–333. For the pediment in the church of Santa Maria della Strada, see Noll, “Visual Image”, 247, 249. For the capital at the cathedral of Bitonto, see Morosini, “Alexander Romance”, 333 and Chiara Settis Frugoni, *Historia Alexandri elevati per grifhos ad aerem: Origine, iconografia e fortuna di un tema* (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1973), 289–290. For the relief at St. Mark’s Basilica in Venice, see Morosini, “Alexander Romance”, 334 and Stoneman, *A Life in Legend*, 198.

Adam and Eve.¹¹ Episodes from the *HP* were also common features of the decorations of fictional palaces in such works as *L'Intelligenza*, Fazio degli Uberti's *Dittamondo*, and Boccaccio's *Filocolo*.

Several Hebrew translations of the *J²HP* (or perhaps a lost Arabic translation of it) were made in Sicily and southern Italy during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹² Around 1190 Godfrey of Viterbo, a German cleric who wrote within a decidedly Italian cultural milieu, completed a universal history in prosimetric Latin, *Pantheon*, at the central Italian city of Viterbo. A brief section of the work discusses several of Alexander's exploits. His sources for this section include the *J²HP*, an epitome of Julius Valerius' text, and the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*.¹³ Godfrey includes such legendary episodes as Nectanebus' fathering of Alexander, various wonders in India, the trees of the sun and moon, and the encounter with the Amazons. He seems to have invented an incident in which Alexander issues challenges to the Romans shortly before he dies.¹⁴ An episode in Godfrey's *Pantheon* that is of particular interest, since he was working not long after some of the Hebrew translators of the *HP*, is Alexander's enclosing of the Lost Tribes of Israel, whom Godfrey identifies as Gog and Magog. Godfrey's Alexander also crosses the miraculously parted Pamphylian Sea in order to pursue the Persians, a story told by Josephus.¹⁵

11 For more on interpretations of the decorative motif, see Noll, "Visual Image", 247, Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 332–335, Settis Frugoni, *Historia Alexandri*, 290, and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 135.

12 For more on Hebrew engagement with the *Alexander Romance* tradition, see Shamma Boyarin, "Hebrew Alexander Romance and Astrological Questions: Alexander, Aristotle, and the Medieval Jewish Audience", in *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages, Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. Markus Stock (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 88–103, Ruth Nisse, "Diaspora as Empire in the Hebrew Deeds of Alexander (*Ma'aseh Alexandros*)", in *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages, Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. Markus Stock (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 76–87, Kratz, *Romances*, xxvi, Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 59, and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 51.

13 Between 1185 and 1190 Godfrey generated five versions of the text. For general discussion of the Alexander section of Godfrey of Viterbo's *Pantheon*, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 339, Lorenzo Braccesi, *L'Alessandro Occidentale. Il Macedone e Roma* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2006), 226–231, and Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 58. For Godfrey's source material for the Alexander section, see Lucienne Meyer, *Les légendes des matières de Rome, de France et de Bretagne dans le "Pantheon" de Godefroi de Viterbe* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1981), 55–114.

14 For more on this passage, see Meyer, *Pantheon*, 109–113 and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 286.

15 Josephus *AJ* 2.348. For more on the episode of the enclosing of Gog and Magog in Godfrey of Viterbo, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 33, Stoneman, *A Life in Legend*, 176,

George Cary highlights what he sees as a tone of moral condemnation in Godfrey of Viterbo's treatment of Alexander and argues that he emphasizes the conqueror's paganism.¹⁶ Godfrey's Alexander, in Cary's view, reveals intolerable arrogance in his correspondence with the Romans and with Dindimus, a Brahmin known from the *Collatio Alexandri cum Dindimo* and *HP* whom Godfrey casts in the role of a pre-Christian ascetic philosopher. He alters the *Collatio Alexandri cum Dindimo* such that Alexander's aggressive and hubristic retorts are no match for the philosopher, whom Godfrey allows the last letter in the correspondence and thus the last word.¹⁷ Cary maintains that Godfrey's treatment of Alexander is the closest the Italian tradition came to "theological attacks" on the conqueror.¹⁸ More recent assessments of Godfrey's depiction of Alexander offer a more moderate opinion, emphasizing the conqueror's role as an instrument of God alongside his status as pagan. Alexander's enclosing of the Lost Tribes of Israel and crossing of the Pamphylian Sea to destroy the Persian Empire are acts that fulfil the will of God, even if Alexander himself is not conscious of this role. Godfrey attempted to synchronize biblical and classical history, and as such Alexander is depicted as the "Last Emperor" who will set in motion the apocalyptic end of the world.¹⁹ Of Godfrey's Alexander, Stoneman tells us that his "role as the conqueror of the Unclean Nations ... makes him fit to be regarded as a part of history in a Christian world."²⁰

The Thirteenth Century

In 1215–1216, Tommasino di Cerclaria, an Italian from Friuli, completed a German didactic poem about courtly etiquette in rhyming verse, *Der Wälsche Gast*,

180, Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 58, and Andrew R. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1932). For the episode of the parting of the Pamphylian Sea, see Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 36 and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 126–127.

16 Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 188.

17 Meyer, *Pantheon*, 82–97 and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 93–94, 180 discuss Godfrey's treatment of the *Collatio Alexandri cum Dindimo*.

18 Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 263.

19 For recent assessments of Godfrey of Viterbo's treatment of Alexander, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 339, Stoneman, *A Life in Legend*, 207, and Braccesi, *L'Alessandro Occidentale*, 226–231. For Alexander as the "Last Emperor", see Stoneman, *A Life in Legend*, 180, 207.

20 Stoneman, *A Life in Legend*, 207.

in which he records some passages from works dating to around 1209 that he wrote in Italian. Among these passages is a call to young men to read stories (*romanzi*) about Alexander (and other legendary figures) as an aid to cultivating virtue and good manners. Tommasino seems to have been familiar with the German Alexander tradition and offers some pointed critiques of Alexander's character, depicting the conqueror as distrustful and suggesting that his famous liberality was a calculated strategy rather than an indicator of true selflessness.²¹

In Recanati in 1236, Quilichinus of Spoleto completed his *Alexandreis*, a poem based on the J³ *HP* in Latin hexameters of "appalling quality", according to Cary.²² The *Alexandreis* is the earliest extant adaptation of J³ and it follows its model closely, without omitting J³'s interpolations and moralizing tone.²³ Quilichinus does innovate, however, in dividing his poem into four books (unlike the three books of the *HP*). Alexander's coronations as king of Macedonia and then of Persia conclude the first and second book, respectively.²⁴ Quilichinus was a judge in the court of Frederick II and it is possible that his choice of subject in the *Alexandreis* was influenced by the emperor's interest in Alexander the Great.²⁵ More importantly, he explains in his prologue that his purpose was to highlight Alexander's place in biblical history and to examine in further detail the reference to Alexander in Maccabees.²⁶

21 For more on Tommasino di Cerclaria, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 340. For his moral critiques of Alexander, see Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 307, 328, 363. Edition: Thomasin von Zirclaria, *Der wälsche Gast des Thomasin von Zirclaria*, trans. Heinrich Rückert (Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 1965).

22 Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 244 expresses a low opinion of the quality of the verse. For Quilichinus' sources, see T. Ferri, "Appunti su Quilichino e le sue opera", *Studi Medievali* 9 (1936): 239–250. Edition: Quilichinus de Spoleto, *Quilichinus de Spoleto. Historia Alexandri Magni, nebst dem Text der Zwickauer Handschrift der Historia de preliis Alexandri Magni, Rezension 13*, ed. Wolfgang Kirsch (Skopje: Univerzitetska Pecatnica, 1971).

23 Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 180, 244.

24 For more on Quilichinus' *Alexandreis*, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 341–342, Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 61, Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 53, Francis P. Magoun, ed., *The Gestes of King Alexander of Macedon. Two Middle-English Alliterative Fragments, Alexander A and Alexander B* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 52, and S. Ferri, "Per l'edizione dell'Alessandreide di Wilichino da Spoleto", *Bollettino della Reale Deputazione di Storia Patria per l'Umbria* 21 (1915): 211–219.

25 Stoneman, *A Life in Legend*, 206.

26 Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 180. For Quilichinus' prologue, see Friedrich Pfister, "Die *Historia de Preliis* und das *Alexanderepos* des Quilichinus", *Münchener Museum für Philologie des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* 1 (1911): 290–291.

Cary views the *Alexandreis* as a dull, uninspired translation with little literary merit, yet the poem seems to have been well received, as twenty manuscripts are extant.²⁷ It found many imitators as well. Italian texts based directly on Quilichinus' *Alexandreis* include Domenico Scolari's *Istoria Alexandri Regis* (1355) and the *Alessandreida in rima* (1430). German texts modelled on Quilichinus' poem include the *Wernigerode Alexander*, a late fourteenth-century German verse translation, and the *Darmstadt Alexander*, a prosimetric manuscript combining J³ with poetic passages from Quilichinus.²⁸ Roberta Morosini and Peter Dronke both argue that Quilichinus made some effort to make the poem his own (for example, by putting the prose *HP* into verse and by transforming Leo's three books into four) and that his project reveals more stylistic originality than he is often given credit for.²⁹ It is clear that the *Alexandreis* was instrumental in introducing the *HP* to a broader Italian audience and also had some influence on the tradition in Germany.³⁰

L'Intelligenza, an anonymous allegorical poem composed in Florence in 1237, the year after Quilichinus completed his *Alexandreis*, contains an *ecphrasis* describing the frescoes that adorn the walls of the fictional Palace of Intelligence. These frescoes depict scenes from various legends (including Arthurian legend and the Trojan War cycle), as well as representations of the deeds of Alexander derived from the legendary tradition. Examples include Nectanebus' seduction of Olympias, Alexander's ascent into the sky, his descent into the sea, and the killing of the basilisk. Morosini notes that legend is mixed with history in the *ecphrasis*, and it seems that the episodes depicted are those that lend themselves well to striking visual representations. "Sensuality in description", as Cary suggests, is the goal of the *ecphrasis*. There is no apparent attempt to provide a coherent account of the life of Alexander.³¹

27 Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 53, 244, 261. On the popularity of the *Alexandreis*, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 341–342. For manuscripts of the *Alexandreis*, see S.H. Thomson, "The *Preconia Frederici II* of Quilichinus of Spoleto", *Speculum* 10 (1935): 386–393 and Ferri, "Wilichino da Spoleto", 211–219.

28 For more on the *Wernigerode Alexander* and the *Darmstadt Alexander*, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 342, Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 62, Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 53–54, 244, and Magoun, *Gests*, 52.

29 Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 341–342; Peter Dronke, introduction to *Alessandro nel Medioevo Occidentale*, by Piero Boitani, Corrado Bologna, Adele Cipolla, and Mariantonia Liborio (Rome: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 1997), lxxiii–lxxv.

30 See Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 340 and Ferri, "Appunti su Quilichino", 239.

31 For more on references to Alexander in the *ecphrasis* in *L'Intelligenza*, see Jane Everson, "Storie di Alessandro Magno nella Tradizione Volgare: Medioevo, Rinascimento e Tempi

Between 1260 and 1265, Brunetto Latini, a statesman and scholar, composed an encyclopaedic compendium of knowledge known as the *Livres dou Tresor*. Latini was from Florence, but wrote the work in French during his time in Paris. It was later translated into Italian, under the title *Tesoro*.³² Despite, as Morosini notes, Latini's stated preference for historical material over legends, the *Livres dou Tresor* includes many legendary episodes, at least some of which likely derive from the French Alexander tradition.³³ The *Tresor* and the Italian *Tesoro* contain such legendary stories as Nectanebus' fathering of Alexander, the latter's descent to the bottom of the sea, his celestial journey, his encounter with the Ichthyophagi, the use of bronze statues to defeat Porus' elephants, and his ingenious solution to the problem of how to kill a basilisk (he and his men hide in large flasks and use a mirror to kill the monster by means of its own lethal reflection). Alexander's encounter with the basilisk was a popular story in the Italian tradition, as the episode is also mentioned in *L'Intelligenza*, Quilichinus' *Alexandreis*, Scolari's *Istoria Alexandri Regis*, and the *Alessandreida in rima*.³⁴

A late thirteenth or early fourteenth century Italian translation of the French *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, called *Fatti di Cesare*, contains a version of a tale from the *Iter ad Paradisum* of Alexander's encounter with the Wonderstone. In this version an old man in a palace at the end of the world gives a stone shaped like a human eye to two of Alexander's men, and orders them to bring it to Alexander and tell him that the world he wishes to conquer is like the stone. Alexander and Aristotle discover that the Wonderstone weighs more than every other object they can find when placed on a scale, until they try weighing it against a ball of saliva and dust. The lesson is that even the lightest

Moderni", *Rassegna europea di letteratura italiana* 41 (2013): 37–38, Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 342–343, and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 222, 270–271, 331–332. The poem was wrongly attributed to Dino Compagni. Edition: Dino Compagni, *L'Intelligenza*, ed. Vittorio Mistruzzi (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1928).

32 For more on the *Livres dou Tresor* and its inclusion of legendary material from the Alexander tradition, see Maud Pérez-Simon, "Science and Learning in the Middle Ages: *Le Roman d'Alexandre en prose*—A Study of Ms Stockholm, Royal Library Vu 20", in *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages, Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. Markus Stock (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 219–220, Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 346–350, and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 264, 349–350. Edition: Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, ed. P.G. Beltrami (Turin: G. Einaudi, 2007).

33 Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 337, 346.

34 Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 347, 350 discusses Alexander's ascent into the sky and descent to the bottom of the sea in the *Tresor*, as well as Latini's treatment of the basilisk episode.

things will be more consequential than the conqueror after his death, a lesson that Alexander mocks by tossing the Wonderstone into a river.³⁵

The Fourteenth Century

The travelogue *Il Milione*, which was composed around 1300, recounts Marco Polo's amazing adventures in foreign lands and engages at many points with episodes from the legendary Alexander tradition. Like the Geographer of Ravenna, *Il Milione* mentions a "book of Alexander" as a source for two episodes (the enclosing of Gog and Magog and the trees of the sun and moon) but does not specify which book. Since the use of legendary Alexander material in *Il Milione* is motivated exclusively by an appetite for the marvellous, the text offers no moral assessments of Alexander's exploits. Italian literature of the fourteenth century is full of descriptions of the exotic and the marvellous, a trend initiated by travelogues such as *Il Milione*.³⁶

The *Fior di Virtù*, a popular Italian anthology of moralizing content from the early fourteenth century, includes several anecdotes that derive from the legendary Alexander tradition. One story involves Alexander's refusal to consume oranges brought to him by one of his soldiers while they are starving in a desert. He instead throws the oranges into a river as a demonstration of his willingness to endure the same hardships as the rest of his army. Those who leap into the river and attempt to retrieve the oranges suffer terrible deaths by drowning. Cary notes that while the anecdote does not appear anywhere else, it bears similarities to the story in the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* in which Alexander refuses to drink water brought to him by a soldier while crossing a desert, and instead pours it out onto the sand.³⁷

35 For the story of the Wonderstone in *Fatti di Cesare*, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 350–351, Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 36, Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 20, and Dario Carraroli, *La Leggenda di Alessandro Magno, Studio Storico-Critico* (Turin: Carlo Clausen, 1892), 274. Edition: Luciano Banchi, trans., *I Fatti di Cesare* (Bologna: Gaetano Romagnoli, 1863).

36 For the Italian enthusiasm for exotic marvels in travel literature of the fourteenth century and the use of material from the legendary Alexander tradition in the *Il Milione* of Marco Polo, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 336, 343, Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 15, 234, and Carraroli, *La Leggenda di Alessandro Magno*, 275.

37 For more on references to Alexander in the *Fior di Virtù*, see Corrado Bologna, "La generosità cavalleresca di Alessandro Magno", *L'immagine riflessa* 12 (1989): 393 and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 160, 348–349. Edition: Bruto Fabricatore, ed., *Fiore di Virtù* (Naples: Stamperia del Vaglio, 1870).

Like Godfrey of Viterbo and Quilichinus, Dante viewed Alexander within the teleological context of God's plan for humanity, which required that Alexander die before achieving dominion of the entire world. He was also interested, like Godfrey, in the idea of how Alexander would have fared against the Romans in battle had he lived long enough to challenge them and suggests that he sent an embassy to the Romans demanding their submission.³⁸ In both authors, Alexander's life ends shortly after he sets his sights on conquering Rome. It is unclear whether Dante was acquainted with the *HP* or any of its descendants directly, yet the episode concerning the embassy to the Romans (as well as an anecdote mentioning Alexander's experiences in India with blazing sand and fiery hail that has some similarities to an episode in the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*) suggests that he was drawing on a legendary source. The lack of specific references to the legendary tradition in Dante may be due to the rationalizing impulse, mentioned by Morosini, that drove authors such as Dante and Boccaccio to consider whether fabulous stories were of any practical use for the philosopher or theologian and to attempt to find rational explanations for the marvellous elements of such stories.³⁹ Yet Dante's conception of Alexander also neatly encapsulates medieval attitudes toward the conqueror, as Cary suggests, in his focus on Alexander's proverbial generosity, his contextualizing of the conqueror within the plans of God, and his willingness to accept at least some legendary tales about Alexander as truth.

Petrarch was Alexander's fiercest Italian critic, and Cary suggests that his dislike of the conqueror exceeded that of any other medieval writer. He admits that Alexander was famous for his generosity, yet attacks him relentlessly in almost all other respects. He based his portrait of Alexander in the *De Viris Illustribus* (a work begun in 1338) on Quintus Curtius Rufus, but carefully chose only the material in Rufus' work that was uncomplimentary to Alexander. Petrarch concluded from Rufus' account that Alexander had an unbalanced personality that swung erratically and unpredictably from one extreme to another, and this seemed unacceptable to a man who valued individuals with steady, unified personalities. Petrarch's Alexander is rash, vain, a lustful womanizer, and a drunk. Two episodes that seem to have been the most repugnant to him include the burning of Persepolis (resulting from too much wine and lust for the courtesan Thais) and the torture and murder of Callisthenes, the latter of which

38 For more on Dante's references to Alexander, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 339, 358, Braccesi, *L'Alessandro Occidentale*, 226–231, Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 217, 264–265, 285–286, and William W. Vernon, *Readings on the Inferno of Dante* (London: Methuen & Co, 1906), vol. 1, 499–500.

39 For more on the rationalizing impulse, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 337.

he describes in gruesome detail and attributes to Alexander's vanity in desiring divine honours. Petrarch loved Rome and its glorious ancient history, and it seems that much of his dislike of Alexander resulted from the idea, common in the legendary tradition, that Alexander might have conquered the Romans had he lived long enough. The notion that Alexander may have been mightier than the Romans was unacceptable to Petrarch.⁴⁰

Boccaccio alludes to episodes from the legends of Alexander in several of his works. In the *Filocolo*, which he wrote early in his literary career in 1336, Boccaccio offers, in the tradition of the description of the palace decorations in *L'Intelligenza*, an *ecphrasis* of images of Alexander that decorate a palace.⁴¹ In the *Filocolo* and Boccaccio's other earlier works, such as *Comedia delle Ninfe* (1341–1342) and *Amorosa Visione* (1342–1343), he offers a positive portrayal of Alexander that emphasizes the conqueror's generosity, while in later works such as *Genealogia* (1355–1374) and his commentary on Dante's *Inferno* (1373–1375), he depicts him as a cruel tyrant. Boccaccio describes Alexander's torture and execution of Callisthenes, for example, at great length in the *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium* (1355–1374), and condemns the incident as a display of inexcusable savagery. Boccaccio was clearly familiar with the *HP* tradition, but it was his familiarity with the works of Quintus Curtius Rufus and Justin that ultimately resulted in a negative assessment of Alexander. As with many other Italian writers of his age, such as Dante, Boccaccio seems to have felt conflicted about his desire to engage with the *HP* tradition. He enjoyed using the legendary material as an ingredient in memorable stories (for example, when he discusses Nectanebus' exploits in the *Amorosa Visione*), yet he does not attempt to pass off this material as truth and in fact mocks the notion that Alexander could have been the son of a god in his *Genealogia*. He also omits the most fantastic events, such as Alexander's underwater and celestial adventures.⁴²

40 For Petrarch's references to Alexander, see Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 99–100, 107, 115, 160, 217–218, 257, 266, 274, 286 and George Cary, "Petrarch and Alexander the Great", *Italian Studies* 5 (1950): 43–55. Edition of *De Viris Illustribus*: Francesco Petrarch, *Le vite degli uomini illustri di Francesco Petrarca*, ed. Luigi Razzolini (Bologna: G. Romagnoli, 1874–1879).

41 For more on Boccaccio's Alexander *ecphrasis* in the *Filocolo*, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 357 and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 222, 270.

42 Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 357–358 describes Boccaccio's transition from a positive portrayal of Alexander in his earlier works to condemnation in his later works. For Alexander's treatment of Callisthenes in Boccaccio, see Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 253, 265. For Boccaccio's rationalizing impulse, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 337, 358.

Around 1350 Fazio degli Uberti, a lyric and didactic poet, composed the poem *Dittamondo*, in which the narrator embarks on a trip around the world, led by the ancient Roman geographer Solinus. In the course of these travels, the narrator encounters a Macedonian castle with exterior marble reliefs depicting scenes from the life of Alexander, reminiscent of the *ecphrases* in *L'Intelligenza* and Boccaccio's *Filocolo*. Fazio degli Uberti seems to have been familiar with Justin and Orosius, along with the *HP* tradition. Legendary episodes in the *ecphrasis* include the enclosing of Gog and Magog, the correspondence between Alexander and the Persian king Darius, and the encounter with the Wonderstone. Guglielmo Cappello, a fifteenth century commentator on the *Dittamondo*, attacks his use of "untrue stories". Even though the Alexander material is presented in the form of an *ecphrasis*, Fazio degli Uberti places great importance on the morality of Alexander's deeds. While viewing the marble reliefs, the narrator expresses interest in Alexander's "vices", which in this case include rage and wine.⁴³

Domenico Scolari was an exiled Florentine who went to school in Perugia at some point in the early fourteenth century. His *Istoria Alexandri Regis*, which he seems to have composed in Umbria, is an Italian biography of Alexander in *ottava rima*, mainly based on Quilichinus' *Alexandreis* with some interpolations from the *J² HP*. There is only one extant manuscript, which was produced in 1355. Scolari anachronistically places his characters in a Christian context and often has them offer Christian prayers. He seems more interested in the historical chronology of Alexander's life than exotic marvels, yet the *Istoria Alexandri Regis* does contain many fabulous elements. He often calls certain episodes "legends" or "gossip", in an attempt to show that he is aware that many of the episodes he relates are not historical facts. Morosini notes that when he does make use of legendary material, he seems to have a particular preference for peculiar types of humans, such as the race of hairy men and the Gymnosophists.⁴⁴

43 For more on the Alexander *ecphrasis* in the *Dittamondo* and Guglielmo Cappello's criticisms of the work, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 356–357 and Stoneman, *A Life in Legend*, 179, 211. Edition: Fazio degli Uberti, *Il Dittamondo e Le rime*, ed. Giuseppe Corsi (Bari: G. Laterza, 1952).

44 For more on Scolari's *Istoria Alexandri Regis*, see Michele Campopiano, "Excelsa monarchia: Alexander the Great in Italian Narrative Poems (14th–16th centuries)", *Incontri* 28 (2013): 57–59, Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 340, 352–354, Concetta Meri Leone, "La trecentesca *Istoria di Alessandro Magno* di Domenico Scolari", in *Il cantare italiano tra folklore e letteratura: atti del convegno internazionale di Zurigo, Landesmuseum, 23–25 giugno 2005*, ed. Michelangelo Picone and Luisa R. Messerli (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 2007), 65–79, Ross,

An epitome of the J^3 *HP* in Italian prose, contained in a fifteenth century Tuscan manuscript known as the *Codex Riccardi 1922*, has been attributed to the Florentine poet Antonio Pucci, which would place it in the second half of the fourteenth century. It is unclear whether the work is based directly on the *HP*, or on an Italian translation of it. The author explains that he will be describing the travels of Marco Polo, yet offers only a few passages from *Il Milione*. His main topic is the adventures of Alexander, interspersed with passages from *Il Milione* and descriptions of a journey to Paradise undertaken by three monks. Morosini argues that the author's interpolations of the *HP* with the travels of Marco Polo and the three monks result in a richly imaginative work that stands as a solid counterargument to claims that the Italian Alexander tradition was dry and derivative. The author's main interest seems to be in the wonders encountered by Alexander in the East, rather than drier material such as his various battles, and like Scolari, he seems most fascinated by tales of strange types of humans, such as the Amazons and the Gymnosophists. Other tales from the *HP* in the epitome include Nectanebus' escape from Egypt and his death at the hands of Alexander, the celestial and underwater adventures, the throne composed of seven jewels, and the river of sand. Morosini suggests that the epitome reveals a tension, as in Dante and Boccaccio, between the wondrous and the rational. The author revels in details of the fabulous adventures of Alexander, yet he is careful to justify his use of the marvellous by assuring the reader that like Dante, he is aware that his stories are more wondrous tales than factual accounts.⁴⁵

I nobili fatti di Alessandro Magno is an anonymous Italian prose text from the end of the fourteenth century. It is a translation of the J^2 *HP*, which is notable in the Italian tradition, with its focus on J^3 . The text is interpolated with passages from Quilichinus' *Alexandreis*. It is a close translation of the *HP*, yet there are occasional points of departure, such as in Alexander's celestial journey. Morosini notes that while Alexander's descent back to earth in the *HP* begins due to a divine command, here Alexander himself initiates the descent by turning upside down the baited sticks that had been urging the griffins

Alexander Historiatus, 61–62, Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 53–54, 188, and Joachim Storost, *Studien zur Alexandersage in der älteren italienischen Literatur: Untersuchungen und Texte* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1935), 4–117.

45 For more on the *Codex Riccardi 1922*, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 344–346, Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 54–55, Storost, *Alexandersage*, 126–132, and Arturo Graf, "Il Zibaldone attribuito ad Antonio Pucci", *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 1 (1883): 282–300. For more on the river of sand, see Stoneman, *Greek Alexander Romance*, 13–14.

upward. In addition to Alexander's ascent, *Inobili fatti* includes the underwater descent, the enclosing of Gog and Magog, and the prophetic trees of the sun and moon.⁴⁶

Federico Frezzi, a Dominican friar and theologian from Foligno, wrote *Il quadriregio del decorso della vita umana* sometime between 1394 and 1403. *Il quadriregio* is an allegorical poem that, in a manner reminiscent of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, tells of a journey through the realms of Vice, Virtue, Love, and Satan. Alexander is mentioned several times in the course of the poem along with other figures from history and legend. The poem offers a highly ambivalent moral portrait of Alexander. He saves a soldier dying of thirst and offers a cloak to a freezing man, both demonstrations of his liberality in the courtly tradition. He is also generally portrayed as valiant, magnanimous, and an excellent legislator. Yet Frezzi also highlights his uncontrollable fits of rage. Ultimately he places Alexander near God and justifies his choice by suggesting that Alexander would have defeated the Romans (and thus taken control of the entire world) had he lived long enough.⁴⁷ Around 1400 Andrea da Barberino composed a prose epic, *Ugone d'Alvernia*, in which he describes a *katabasis* to Hell. The soul of Alexander is eternally punished in a lake of boiling blood due to his cruel tyranny, drunkenness, greed, and murderous acts.⁴⁸

The Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries

The *Alessandreida in rima*, which seems to have been the most popular Italian poem on Alexander, may have been composed by Jacopo di Carlo, a priest from Florence, though it was probably written by someone from Gubbio who was familiar with the French Alexander tradition. At this point, the French tradition began to infiltrate Italian Alexander literature in an unmistakable

46 For more on *Inobili fatti*, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 355–356, Kratz, *Romances*, xxv, Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 58, Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 50, Storost, *Alexandersage*, 118–125, and Carraroli, *La Leggenda di Alessandro Magno*, 260. Edition: Giusto Grion, ed., *Inobili Fatti di Alessandro Magno* (Bologna: Gaetano Romagnoli, 1872).

47 For more on *Il quadriregio*, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 361–362 and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 286, 318. Edition: Federico Frezzi, *Il Quadriregio di Federico Frezzi da Foligno: un viaggio nei quattro regni*, ed. Elena Laureti (Foligno: Edizioni Orfini Numeister, 2007).

48 For more on the reference to Alexander in the *Ugone d'Alvernia*, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 359. Edition: Andrea da Barberino, *Storia di Ugone d'Alvernia*, ed. Francesco Zambrini, Alberto Bacchi della Lega, and Giovanni Vigentino (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1968).

way. The hero of the *Alessandreida in rima* is noble and generous, with a keen sense of chivalry. The poem, which consists of twelve cantos in *ottava rima*, was composed around 1430. It is an adaptation of the *J³ HP* rather than a close translation, with some interpolations and certain passages expanded. Cary notes that the author has extended some descriptions of battles, thus creating a text that is more of a historical romance than the *HP*. It contains the various expected legendary episodes, including the celestial ascent, the underwater descent, and the enclosing of Gog and Magog. The poem offers a very detailed account of the defeat of the basilisk in which the mirror that Alexander and his men use to defeat it is surrounded with bells that jingle to alert them when the beast has died. The first printed edition was produced in 1512, and its popularity is demonstrated by at least fourteen more printings that followed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, mostly produced in or near Venice.⁴⁹

The *Libro del Nascimento* is an Italian prose translation of the *J³ HP* published in 1474. It seems to have been extremely popular, with numerous printings between 1474 and 1502.⁵⁰ Domenico Falugio's *Triumpho Magno*, published in 1521, is an Italian poem in *ottava rima* in twenty-seven cantos. Falugio was from Incisa-Val d'Arno and his *Triumpho Magno* earned him the title of poet laureate from Pope Leo X. Falugio's main source was not the *HP*, but rather Quintus Curtius Rufus, whose work he adapted freely. Yet he turned to the *HP* for the episode of Nectanebus' fathering of Alexander, since Rufus' text lacked an account of Alexander's birth. Falugio occasionally references other legendary episodes as well (such as the celestial flight, encounters with fantastic beasts, and the Wonderstone), yet the *Triumpho Magno* represents the decline of the courtly Alexander with his many encounters with exotic marvels. Falugio's treatment of Alexander's story is very much in the style of Renaissance burlesque epic, a genre that often satirized traditional concepts of chivalry and nobility. Falugio's Alexander is a rash fool and a man frequently overcome by both wine and lust. His description of the burning of Persepolis at the suggestion of the cour-

49 For more on the *Alessandreida in rima*, see Noll, "Visual Image", 252, Campopiano, "Excelsa monarchia", 59–60, Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 337, 347–348, 350, 359–360, Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 63, Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 55, 271, and Storost, *Alexandersage*, 180–230. Edition: Anne W. Tordi, trans., *Alexandreida in rima: the Life and Deeds of Alexander the Great in an Anonymous Italian Renaissance Poem* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2004).

50 For more on the *Libro del Nascimento*, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 355, 360–361, Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 63, Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 56, and Storost, *Alexandersage*, 168–179.

tesan Thais combines these two vices to tragic effect. Falugio's Alexander seeks danger and violence as an end in itself, for example when he sets out to find the giant Violante, with no apparent interest in knowledge about the marvels of the world for their own sake.⁵¹

A fragment of a poem in *ottava rima* with a similar tone of Renaissance burlesque can be found in a sixteenth century manuscript at the Biblioteca Nazionale in Rome (*BN 1751*, Mo. M10). Like Falugio's *Triumpho Magno*, Quintus Curtius Rufus is the main source. The author seems to prioritize Alexander's amorous adventures with beautiful women. Yet the tone is not crude, like the *Triumpho Magno* with its descriptions of Alexander's drunkenness and lust, but rather aristocratic and refined.⁵²

Conclusions

Medieval and Renaissance Italian engagement with the legends of Alexander focused on the j^3 *HP*, with occasional use of j^2 and texts such as the *Collatio Alexandri cum Dindimo*, the *Iter ad Paradisum*, and the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*. Quilichinus' *Alexandreis* likewise had a large impact on subsequent Italian Alexander literature. Cary suggests that the Italian tradition was derivative and dull, consisting of dry imitations of the *HP* and Quilichinus.⁵³ Yet as Morosini demonstrates, Italian Alexander literature was often highly imaginative and enriched by a continual process of rewriting and interpolations both from other genres (such as travelogues) and foreign literary traditions.⁵⁴

Medieval authors in Italy were fascinated by Alexander's wondrous adventures and the various marvels he encountered in the legendary tradition. They seem to have been particularly captivated by descriptions of bizarre beasts and strange races of humans. While Italy never established a theological conception of Alexander in line with that of the German tradition, which offered highly developed critiques of Alexander from a biblical perspective, some medieval Italian authors nevertheless discussed Alexander's role in biblical his-

51 For more on Falugio's *Triumpho Magno*, see Campopiano, "Excelsa monarchia", 60–62, Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 351–352, 363–364, Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 73, Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 67, 272, and Storost, *Alexandersage*, 231–282.

52 For more on *BN 1751*, see Campopiano, "Excelsa monarchia", 62–63, Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 364, Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 67, 272, and Storost, *Alexandersage*, 283–304.

53 Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 207–208, 261–262.

54 Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 331, 335, 337–338.

tory.⁵⁵ Depictions of the celestial journey in southern Italian churches dating to the eleventh through thirteenth centuries likewise suggest that medieval Italians were thinking about Alexander in a religious context, though as we have seen, some of these images reflect positively on Alexander and others suggest a more negative interpretation. Italy also had a strong tradition of literary descriptions of palace art featuring Alexander, reflecting the historical reality of Alexander's legends as common decorative motifs.

As the Middle Ages transitioned into the Renaissance, Italian authors of Alexander literature became more interested in painting a picture of a unique individual than in using Alexander's life as a series of moral *exempla* or in focusing on his role in biblical history or a succession of empires.⁵⁶ Alexander's personality became more important than narrating tales of exotic marvels, and many writers seem to have felt torn between their enjoyment of fabulous tales and their desire to communicate to their readers that they prioritized historical truth over legends and could tell the difference between the two. Fabulous tales retained a place of importance in Alexander literature due to the Renaissance delight in aesthetically pleasing narrative descriptions, but they no longer featured as prominently as they had in the works of medieval authors, who enthusiastically sought out marvels for their own sake. Renaissance writers were also much more interested than their medieval counterparts in consulting and comparing multiple sources, rather than merely reproducing one particular text.

The Alexander tradition in medieval France had centred on the idea of Alexander as a chivalrous knight, but Italy had no such indigenous conception of Alexander. The courtly French tradition seems to have begun diffusing into Italy by the thirteenth century, where it flourished as a foreign concept in what Cary terms the "hot-house culture" of Italy.⁵⁷ While the courtly conception of Alexander began to fade away in most of Europe by the late medieval period, in Italy it was revived and transformed by Renaissance poets who viewed the *HP* tradition (along with other legendary traditions such as that of King Arthur) as a fertile source of timeless, exciting material to incorporate into their own poetry.⁵⁸ This Renaissance regeneration of the chivalrous Alexander emphasized his proverbial liberality and various romantic liaisons,

55 For theological interest in Alexander, see Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 337, 340 and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 188, 263.

56 See Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 266, 274.

57 For the diffusion of the French courtly tradition into Italy, see Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 217–218, 261, 269–270.

58 For the Renaissance revival of the courtly Alexander tradition in Italy, see Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 233, 262.

both of which were essential components of the courtly Alexander tradition in France. Yet there was also a great deal of diversity in the Renaissance conception of Alexander. Domenico Falugio satirizes courtly chivalry with his crude, self-centred hero who seeks out violence and adventure for its own sake and has none of the thirst for knowledge of earlier Italian conceptions of Alexander.⁵⁹

In the 1430s, Emperor Sigismund charged Pier Paolo Vergerio with producing a Latin translation of Arrian's history of Alexander's campaigns. Vergerio produced an unsophisticated text in simple Latin that the emperor could read without difficulty and commented in a letter to Sigismund on deficiencies in the other histories of Alexander.⁶⁰ Vergerio's Latin translation made Arrian available to a wider readership. Guarino da Verona likewise translated Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* into Latin around 1430, and thus made it more readily accessible to the average educated Italian. Sometime in the fifteenth century, Pier Candido Decembrio translated Quintus Curtius Rufus' history into Italian.⁶¹ As these texts of the ancient Alexander historians came to be rediscovered and translated into Latin and Italian, the Renaissance conception of Alexander in Italy became more and more historical rather than legendary.⁶²

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- 59 See Morosini, "Alexander Romance", 351 and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 272.
- 60 For more on Pier Paolo Vergerio and the Italian reception of Arrian, see Noll, "Visual Image", 244, 247, Gilbert Tournoy, "La storiografia greca nell'Umanesimo: Arriano, Pier Paolo Vergerio e Enea Silvio Piccolomini", *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 55 (2006): 1–8, Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 81, and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 238–239, 267, 375–377. Cary prints a letter from Vergerio to Sigismund, discussing Arrian and the other historians of Alexander.
- 61 For Guarino da Verona's translation of Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*, see Noll, "Visual Image", 248, Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, 82, and Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 267. For Pier Candido Decembrio's translation of Curtius Rufus, see Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 266.
- 62 See Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, 224, 274.

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Syriac and Persian Versions of the *Alexander Romance*

Krzysztof Nawotka

The Syriac *Alexander Romance* (AR) is the most distinguished part of the Syriac and indeed of all eastern literary tradition of Alexander the Great. A notable peculiarity of AR is that a very high number of its versions were produced in late Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the early modern age in Europe, Asia and Africa, usually not as proper translations but rather as variant versions transformed to fit cultural needs and traditions of the target reader, with Pfister registering some two hundred of them.¹ The ancient and early medieval versions of AR, especially Greek ones (α, β, γ, *δ), are usually called recensions and I will be using this name here. It is generally acknowledged that all surviving eastern versions of AR, attested as far as Mongolia² and Malaysia,³ are ultimately derived from its Syriac variant. The Arabic derivatives are perhaps the best researched part of the eastern tradition of AR thanks largely, but not exclusively, to the seminal book of Doufika-Aerts who has also been conducting a study of the Alexander cycle in Asia and Africa.⁴

The Syriac AR is but a part of the rich Syriac tradition on Alexander the Great, whose other members are traditionally called: *Verse history* attributed to Jacob of Serūgh, *Life of Alexander*, *Sayings of Alexander*, *Exploits of Alexander*, Alexander's *excerpta* in the *Chronicle* of Ps.-Dionysios of Tell-Mahre, in a ms.

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- 1 Friedrich Pfister, "Studien zum Alexanderroman", *Würzburger Jahrbücher* 1946: 29–66.
 - 2 Nikolaus N. Poppe, "Eine mongolische Fassung der Alexandersage", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft* 107 (1957): 105–127; Francis W. Cleaves, "An early Mongolian version of the Alexander Romance", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 22 (1959): 1–99.
 - 3 Pieter J. van Leeuwen, *De Maleische Alexanderroman* (Meppel: B. ten Brink, 1937); Su F. Ng, "The *Alexander Romance* in Southeast Asia: Wonder, Islam, and Knowledge of the World", in *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages: Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. Markus Stock (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 104–122.
 - 4 Faustina Doufika-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus: A Survey of the Alexander Tradition through Seven Centuries: From Pseudo-Callisthenes to Šūrī* (Paris: Peeters, 2010); Faustina Doufika-Aerts, "King Midas' Ears on Alexander's Head: In Search of the Afro-Asiatic Alexander Cycle", in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson and Ian R. Netton (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2012), 61–79.

369 from Dayr al-Za‘frān and in the Syriac version of Palladius’ *De gentibus Indiae et Bragmanibus*. A thorough, well-referenced discussion of the Syriac literary tradition on Alexander the Great can be found in Monferrer-Sala’s chapter in the Brill’s *Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages* and valuable earlier treatments are Czeglédý’s and Gero’s;⁵ hence there is no need to repeat this discussion here. The Syriac AR is generally accessible to modern readers in the 1889 edition with English translation of E.A.W. Budge, reprinted in 2003 (from which all quotations from the Syriac AR are taken). It is preserved in six manuscripts,⁶ five of which were consulted by Budge who, however, based his edition on the oldest manuscript BL. Add. 25,875 of 1708–1709.

The date of Budge’s edition marks the beginning of the systematic modern research of this branch of Alexander legends, as already Budge addressed the questions of the author of the Syriac translation and of the way of its transmission from the original Greek. To him the Syriac text was created by a Christian priest, working between the seventh and the ninth c. and translating from a lost Arabic intermediary.⁷ The last assertion was demolished by Nöldeke to disappear from the subsequent scholarship,⁸ the first one has developed into the Syriac translator becoming a Nestorian monk working in northern Mesopotamia.⁹ Although in principal the Syriac AR conveys mythological allusions and names of pagan gods just as other early versions of AR do, infrequent phrases of clearly Christian colouring can be found there, e.g. Nectanebo greets Olympias “peace be with thee”,¹⁰ the same greeting is pronounced to Alexander by the deified Sesonchosis,¹¹ the last words of dying Darius are “in thy hands I leave my spirit”—like the words of Jesus in Luke 23.46¹²—or in his Last Will Alexander

5 Juan P. Monferrer-Sala, “Alexander the Great in the Syriac Literary Tradition”, in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Z. David Zuwiyya (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 41–72; Károly Czeglédý, “Syriac legend concerning Alexander the Great”, *AOrientHung* 7 (1957): 231–249; Stephen Gero, “The Legend of Alexander the Great in the Christian Orient”, *Bulletin of John Rylands Library* 75 (1993): 3–9.

6 The description of manuscripts in: Ernest A.W. Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great, being the Syriac Version of Pseudo Callisthenes: Edited from Five Manuscripts, with an English Translation and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1889), xv–xxxiv and Monferrer-Sala, “Alexander the Great”, 45–47.

7 Budge, *History of Alexander*, lviii–lxii.

8 Theodor Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans* (Vienna, 1890), 11–17.

9 Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Geschichte*, 17.

10 I.4; Budge, *History of Alexander*, 4.

11 III.14; Budge, *History of Alexander*, 126.

12 II.12; Budge, *History of Alexander*, 81.

consoles Olympias saying “for such is the will of God”.¹³ The story of the foundation of Alexandria (1.31–32) is transformed with Serapis identified with Joseph son of Jacob and the pagan aitiological story of Agathos Daimon omitted. All of this leaves no doubt that author of the Syriac AR was a Christian, but making him a Nestorian priest/monk is not based on items internal to the text or on any independent tradition, as none exists. It was proposed by Nöldeke as a corollary to his ingenious idea that the Syriac AR was derived from a Middle Persian (imprecisely called Pahlavi)¹⁴ translation of Ps.-Callisthenes. If so, only a person with good knowledge of both languages, to Nöldeke a Christian ethnic Persian who knew also Syriac, could produce the translation.

Both Nöldeke’s ideas have gained the status of scholarly orthodoxy, (almost) generally followed to this day,¹⁵ despite some reservations expressed already in 1891 in Fränkel’s review of Nöldeke’s book.¹⁶ Nöldeke’s hypothetical identification of a Middle Persian intermediary is based on the same methodological premises as applied by Budge: both, having noticed irregularities, phonological phenomena and borrowings in the Syriac text, especially in proper names, tried to explain them by searching for their possible sources in a non-Greek translation of the AR consulted by the Syriac author. The unspoken premise was the assumption, typical of the nineteenth-century Classical philology, that

13 111.22, Budge, *History of Alexander*, 139.

14 Claudia A. Ciancaglini, “The Syriac Version of the Alexander Romance”, *Le Muséon* 114 (2001): 122–123, n. 3.

15 E.g. Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur, mit Ausschluss der christlich-palästinensischen Texte* (Bonn: Marcus und Weber, 1922), 125; Czeglédy, “Syriac legend”, 241; John A. Boyle, “The Alexander Romance in the East and West”, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 60 (1977), 13–14; Mino S. Southgate, trans., *Iskandarnamah: A Persian Medieval Alexander-Romance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 168; Ehsan Yarshater, “Iranian National History”, In *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), vol. III: 472; Sebastian P. Brock, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984), 8; Mary Boyce and Frantz Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrianism* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), Vol. III: 60, n. 40; Rudolf Macuch, “Pseudo-Callisthenes Orientalis and the Problem of *Du l-qarnain*”, in *Graeco-Arabica: International Congress on Greek and Arabic Studies* (Athens: Association for Greek and Arabic Studies, 1991), vol. IV: 223–264; Gero, “Legend of Alexander”, 5; Marina Gaillard, *Alexandre le Grand en Iran. Le Dârâb Nâmeh d’Abu Tâher Tarsusi*, Paris: De Boccard, 2005, 14; Kevin van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes: From Pagan Sage to Prophet of Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 27, n. 20; Monferrer-Sala, “Alexander the Great”, 42, 44.

16 Sigmund Fränkel, review of *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans*, by Theodor Nöldeke, *ZDMG* 45 (1891): 309–321.

there always has to be an intermediate stage for every ancient piece of literature, happily lost forever and thus lending itself to endless speculations.

Nöldeke's linguistic arguments have been critically assessed by Frye and Ciancaglini (in 1998 in Italian and 2001 in English).¹⁷ Following upon Frye's and Fränkel's observations Ciancaglini has shown that Nöldeke's phonological arguments are quite weak as they are based on select examples of irregularities, disregarding the majority of cases in which Greek words are correctly rendered in the Syriac AR. To strengthen his argument for an intermediate text, in places Nöldeke invents Middle Persian and Greek *hapax legomena*, attested neither in sources known in his days nor in the 120 or so years since.¹⁸ Ciancaglini further notices that confusion in spelling is limited to proper names only, often transcribed in the Syriac AR in variant ways, while common Greek loanwords are spelled correctly. This, Ciancaglini shows, is best explained on the grounds of translation directly from Greek into Syriac done by a person with good knowledge of Greek but lacking a Classical educational background. The number of loan words from Middle Persian is about average for Syriac texts and hence too low to be used as an argument supporting Nöldeke's interpretation. There is also a large number of Grecisms, both as loan words and structural calques in compound words, both disregarded by Nöldeke. A number of places incomprehensible in Syriac can be best explained as mistakes in translation from Greek. Ciancaglini's paper shows this from the linguistic point of view, and that approach was the cornerstone of Nöldeke's influential hypothesis of the Middle Persian intermediary translation. Thus the Syriac AR almost certainly came into being as a direct rendering in Syriac of a Greek original. Now the position of Frye and Ciancaglini has been gaining some, but not (yet) universal acceptance.¹⁹

17 Richard N. Frye, "Two Iranian Notes", in *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), vol. 1: 185–190; Claudia A. Ciancaglini, "Gli antecedenti di romanzo siriano di Alessandro", in *La diffusione dell'eredità classica nell'età tardoantica e medievale: Il "Romanzo di Alessandro" e altri scritti*, ed. Alfredo Valvo (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1998), 55–93; Ciancaglini, "Syriac Version."

18 Ciancaglini, "Syriac Version", 127–128.

19 Richard Stoneman, *Il romanzo di Alessandro* (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, 2007), Vol. 1: LXXXI; Josef Wiesehöfer, "The 'Accursed' and the 'Adventurer': Alexander the Great in Iranian Tradition", in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Z. David Zuwiyya (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 128, n. 48; Doufikaer-Aerts, "King Midas' Ears", 62; Emily Cottrell, "Al-Mubaššir ibn Fatik and the α version of the *Alexander Romance*", in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson and Ian R. Netton (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2012), 236, n. 11; Julia Rubanovich, "Re-writing the Episode of Alexander and Candace in Medieval Persian Literature: Patterns, Sources and Motif

The position advocated by Ciancaglini should come as no surprise, having in mind the shape of Middle Persian and Syriac literatures, as we know them. The surviving Middle Persian literature is mostly religious in nature, produced largely by Zoroastrian priests. The pseudo-historical *Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān*, a prose epic tale of the rise to power of the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, was written by a priest too and espouses Zoroastrian beliefs on the nature of royal power in its close connection with religion. Non-Zoroastrian texts in Middle Persian are mostly religious books of Christian and Manichaean authors. A few didactic texts survived too and reportedly there were books on philosophy, logic and various branches of science written in Middle Persian or at least translated into this language as well.²⁰ The bulk of Iranian literature of the Sasanian era was oral and the remnants of it, in the form of quotations, fragments and later reworkings, show *Xʷaday-Namag* (*Book of Lords*) as the most typical genre, concentrating on lives of semi-legendary kings and heroes of Iran who fought its enemies, both in the East (Turan) and in the West (Rum, representing the Roman Empire and its forerunners, from Alexander the Great on).²¹ In this cultural landscape it does not seem to be a place for the unashamedly pagan and Greek *Alexander Romance*, a fictional biography of the greatest enemy of Iran, here represented as an ideal king. The alleged Middle Persian AR left no trace on the image of Alexander in Sasanian, almost universally Zoroastrian literature. This literature heaps all sort of blame on Alexander, from slaying the Kayanid Dara (a dim memory of Darius III), to killing magi and aristocrats, destroying cities, extinguishing holy fires, burning, stealing and translating the *Avesta*, to dividing the empire of Iran into petty kingdoms, all the way to calling him *gizistag* (accursed), the epithet normally reserved for the evil spirit Ahriman.²² A positive image of Alexander was to appear much later, in Muslim times, when indeed the AR was absorbed into New Persian literature.

Later antiquity gave birth to literature in Syriac, i.e. in the language grown from the Aramaic dialect of Edessa, flourishing in the wide area from Mediter-

Transformation", in *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages: Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. Markus Stock (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 125 and n. 10.

20 Van Bladel, *Arabic Hermes*, 23–58; Touraj Daryaei, *Sasanian Persia: The Rise and Fall of an Empire* (London: Tauris, 2009), 107–116.

21 Van Bladel, *Arabic Hermes*, 58–62.

22 *Ardāy Wirāz Nāmag* 1.1–7; Firoze M. Kotwal and Philip G. Kreyenbroek, "Alexander the Great ii. In Zoroastrian Tradition", In *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Last Updated: July 29, 2011. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/alexander-the-great-ii>; Wiesehöfer, "Accursed' and 'Adventurer'".

ranean Syria to Mesopotamia and Babylonia, from the second c. onward, no matter whether the speakers of this language can be identified as a separate *ethnos* or not.²³ The Syriac identity and Syriac literature was closely connected with the Christian Church or many Churches in the Roman and Sasanian empires. Since some of the most important centres of Syriac Christianity were located within the Sasanian empire and Church leaders are not infrequently attested in Sasanian court circles, there must have been a constant cultural Persian-Syriac exchange. Religious discussion between Syriac Christian and Zoroastrian Persian leaders are well attested, while reciprocal literary influence much less so. No direct translations from the Middle Persian into Syriac are known and the *Legend of Mar Qardagh* of the age of Khusrau II, which knows Sasanian epic themes and dialogues with them juxtaposing the Christian saint Mar Qardagh to the Persian king Ardashir of the *Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān*, is unique among Syriac literature in its deep knowledge of Sasanian culture and religion.²⁴ At the same time, even among those who professed writing in Syriac only, there were plentiful people fluent in Greek, with numerous translations of text going both ways, although in the majority of cases from Greek into Syriac. In the Syriac-majority areas Greek was generally understood by the educated churchmen and was perceived as the natural vehicle of intercultural dialogue.²⁵ Hence a direct translation of AR from the Greek original into Syriac is a much more obvious development than an unparalleled transmission from Greek into Middle Persian and then into Syriac.

This brings us back to questions of the authorship of the Syriac AR and of the date of its composition. The fact that the three mss. which preserve it, including the oldest one, are written in a Nestorian hand does not bring support to the Nestorian hypothesis: all mss. are very late, the oldest composed in 1708–1709, hence their Nestorian scripture gives no clue as to the Syriac archetype. The hypothesis of a Nestorian author of the Syriac AR is surely derived from the general knowledge of Christianity in the Roman-Persian border area. To the East of the border the Church was true to the teaching of Theodore of Mopsuetia and in modern scholarship it is labelled (improperly) Nestorian,²⁶ while from

23 Fergus Millar, "The Evolution of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the Pre-Islamic Period: From Greek to Syriac?", *J ECS* 21 (2013): 45–50.

24 Joel T. Walker, *The Legend of Mar Qardagh: Narrative and Christian Heroism in Late Antique Iraq* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2006), 117–163.

25 Millar, "Evolution of Syrian".

26 Christine Shepardson, "Syria, Syriac, Syrian: Negotiating East and West," in *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, ed. Philip Rousseau and Jutta Raithel (Malden, Oxford and Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), 463.

the beginning of the fifth c. the Sasanian kings made every effort to assure the independence of the Christian Church in their realm from ecclesiastic centres in the hostile Roman Empire.²⁷ If one follows Nöldeke in the belief of a Middle Persian intermediary AR, attributing its authorship to a “Nestorian” monk might seem logical. Yet with the domination of the “Nestorian” Church among the Christians of the Sasanian Empire, many other denominations are attested in the Syriac speaking lands: (monophysite) Syrian Orthodox taking pride of place in Roman Syria/Northern Mesopotamia with the Jacobite (orthodox) in minority. Both Syrian Orthodox and Jacobite Christians lived in the Sasanian lands too. There is no obvious way to identify the author of the Syriac AR with any of these Churches, albeit the generally held view of him as of a priest/monk seems justified, having in mind that identifiable Syriac authors were almost always clergymen.

One significant detail in the Syriac AR calls into question the traditional identification of its author as a Sasanian subject, immersed in the culture of the Persian East: in its rendition of the last days of Alexander, the dying king is carried in his bed to the hippodrome so that his soldiers might see him for the last time (III.21). This scene differs from the rendition of most other early versions of AR in which the king's bed is placed in an unspecified place in which his soldiers might see him, but also from the later Persian rendition—both in the *Šāh-nāma* of Ferdowsī and in the *Dārāb-nāma* of Ṭārsūsī, Alexander's bed is placed on the plain. It seems that all later authors adapted the scene to what would be the most appropriate setting in their times and place, thus the Syriac author using the most distinguished place for gatherings in late Roman/Byzantine empire, the hippodrome, which was later erased by Persian authors unfamiliar with the hippodrome as the place where people could see their king. Telling are also the names of planets in the scene in which Nectanebo shows his trade to Olympias: “Ares, whom they call in Persian Vahrâm ... Nâbô the scribe, who is called in Persian Ṭîr ... Bêl, who is called in Persian Hormazd ... Baltî, who is called in Persian Anâhîd”.²⁸ Apart from Greek (Ares) and Persian (Vahrâm, Ṭîr, Hormazd, Anâhîd), we encounter Nâbô, Bêl and Baltî, the names of gods typical of Mesopotamia in general or of its northern part in particular. Balti was a north Mesopotamian goddess of love and fertility, attested in Edessa,²⁹ while the *Teaching of Addai* testifies to the

27 Peter Edwell, “Sasanian interactions with Rome and Byzantium”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, ed. Daniel T. Potts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 849.

28 I.6; Budge, *History of Alexander*, 5.

29 Han J.W. Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 185–186.

thriving cults of Bel and Nebo in this city well into the 5th c.³⁰ If these details are indicative of the cultural milieu in which the author of the Syriac AR worked, they would point to a multicultural place in Roman rather than in Persian north Mesopotamia, perhaps Edessa, the leading centre of Syriac literature.

No existing tradition relates the date of composition of the Syriac AR while the manuscript tradition cannot be pushed before the late 17th c.³¹ A support for Nöldeke's date of composition in the first half of the seventh c. seems to be provided by the political circumstances of the last stage of the wars between the Eastern Roman Empire and Sasanian Persia. After he had won the critical battle of Nineveh in 627, Heraclius was lauded by his court panegyrist as new Alexander, new David, new Constantine praised primarily as a Christian warrior defeating the false Zoroastrian faith.³² Thus the outburst of Alexander-related literature is perceived as an outcome of the court-inspired propaganda.³³ For all these reasons the date of the Syriac AR in the first half of the seventh c. is generally accepted now.³⁴ The internal evidence of the Syriac AR is not very helpful: the only item related to the date of composition is the name Khusrau in place of Xerxes known from Greek versions in the story of Alexander's visit in a Persian royal palace.³⁵ Since the whole scene is apocryphal, both the Greek and the Syriac authors quite obviously used this name of a Persian king which had the greatest resonance in their days and Khusrau I Anushiruwān (531–579) and Khusrau II Parvēz (590–628) were the longest reigning and the best known late Sasanian kings, hence the name of one of them replaced that of Xerxes. The name Khusrau in the Syriac AR generally points to the date in the late sixth-early seventh c. not necessarily during the reign of any of them, as propounded by some modern scholars.³⁶

30 Shepardson, "Syria, Syriac", 458.

31 Ciancaglini, "Syriac Version", 139–140.

32 Mary Whitby, "A new image for a new age: George of Pisidia on the Emperor Heraclius", in *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East: Proceedings of a Colloquium held at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków in September 1992*, ed. Edward Dąbrowa (Kraków, 1994), 204–206; Walker, *Legend of Mar*, 146.

33 Gerrit J. Reinink, "Die Entstehung der syrischen Alexanderlegende als politisch-religiöse Propagandaschrift für Herakleios' Kirchenpolitik", in *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History Offered to Professor Albert Van Roey for his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Carl Laga, Joseph A. Munitiz and Lucas van Rompay (Leuven: Peeters, 1985), 263–281.

34 Boyle, "Alexander Romance", 14; Sebastian P. Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature* (Kotayyam: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 1997), 51; Monferrer-Sala, "Alexander the Great", 41–42.

35 III.18, Budge, *History of Alexander*, 132.

36 Wiesehöfer, "'Accursed' and 'Adventurer'", 128, n. 48.

The linguistic arguments advanced by Frye and Ciangalino are decisive to reject Nöldeke's theory of an intermediate Pahlavi romance. Its existence is extremely unlikely in the light of the known development of Middle Persian and Syriac literatures in the 6th–8th c. Since the place of the Syriac AR as a direct translation from Greek seems assured within the *stemma* of different, early versions of Ps.-Callisthenes, it acquires a position of importance in any study of textual problems of AR and with any attempt to approximate the shape of its archetype.³⁷ The Syriac AR is generally believed to belong to the *δ branch of the AR tradition, so named after a lost Greek early recension from which both the Latin translation of Leo of Naples and the Syriac AR were produced.³⁸ Since both of these versions lay behind the great majority of Western and Eastern tradition of AR, the position of the *δ line in the transmission of Ps.-Callisthenes and of legends of Alexander the Great in the early Middle Ages and in the early modern age is unparalleled, at least outside the Greek literature. Indeed a number of *loci* convey similar readings in the Syriac AR and Leo in opposition to other early versions, e.g.: Alexander, still a teenager, pacifies the country/city of the Armenians,³⁹ during the siege of Tyre Alexander dreams of grapes, not of cheese,⁴⁰ Persian ambassadors bring to Darius a portrait of Alexander,⁴¹ sesame seed is among the gifts of Darius mockingly sent to Alexander,⁴² around the time of the battle of the Pinaros (Issus) Alexander makes a short trip home on account of illness of Olympias,⁴³ prior to issuing an oracle to Alexander a prophetess in Delphi drinks from the Castalian spring,⁴⁴ when Alexander arrives to the seat of Darius, the Great King takes Alexander for god Mithras and bows to him.⁴⁵ Sometimes, by agreeing with some other early versions, the readings of the Syriac AR help to establish the probable reading of the archetype distorted in transmission to ms. A, the earliest surviving Greek recension of Ps.-Callisthenes.

37 Stoneman, *Romanzo di Alessandro*, LXXXI.

38 Adolf Ausfeld, *Der griechische Alexanderroman* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1907), 17–23; David J.A. Ross, *Alexander Historiatus: A Guide to Medieval Illustrated Alexander Literature* (London: Warburg Institute, 1963), 45–65.

39 I.23; Budge, *History of Alexander*, 31.

40 I.35; Budge, *History of Alexander*, 44.

41 I.36; Budge, *History of Alexander*, 45.

42 I.37 and 38; Budge, *History of Alexander*, 47 and 50.

43 I.41 and 43; Budge, *History of Alexander*, 53 and 55.

44 I.47; Budge, *History of Alexander*, 61–62.

45 II.6; Budge, *History of Alexander*, 72.

In principal the Syriac AR follows very closely the story line of the original Greek AR, as we know it from its oldest version, although not an archetype (known as α), ms. A, beginning with the Egyptian *logos* which shows king Nectanebo as the father of Alexander, to Alexander's (spurious) last will and death in Babylon as a result of poison administered by a group of Macedonian conspirators. There is a number of small discrepancies in phrasing, numbers and names, but the same happens in other early versions of the AR, by some modern scholars described as an open text, modified by scribes and translators, so that it might fit the needs of their local culture.⁴⁶ Among major differences between Syriac AR and ms. A is missing contents of what is 11.6–13 in ms. A, perhaps because the Greek codex from which the Syriac translation was done lacked a few leaves containing these chapters.⁴⁷ Alexander's letter to Aristotle in book III ('miracle letter': chapter 17 in ms. A, chapter 7 in Syriac) is much transformed and expanded: after the episode of the 'night of horrors' Alexander experiences a number of adventures, either unique to this version of AR or attested only in Syriac and Leo. To the second group belong Alexander's encounters with the wild men with faces like ravens, with a tree which was growing and diminishing during the day, with a phoenix, a visit to a temple of Dionysos on the top of a high mountain, and the episode of Alexander's soldiers carried away into the Ocean by giant men.

The episodes known exclusively from the Syriac AR are that of Alexander killing a dragon by feeding it with oxen filled with gypsum, pitch and sulphur, of Alexander's journey to Šîn (China), and of Alexander's journey through desert, fighting nomads and founding the city of Sôd/Sogd (Samarkand) and ordering a temple of Rhea/Nâni to be built, and founding Margiôs (Margiane), i.e. Mârô (Merv). That of killing of a dragon had a long afterlife, becoming, somewhat transformed, a national myth of Poland, known as the story of the Dragon of Wawel, i.e. of the castle in Kraków.⁴⁸ Although it is absent in the deficient copy of Leo which we have today, it was surely present in the original Latin translation of Leo of Naples, as it can be traced in some versions of the *De Preliis*, itself derived from Leo. There is little doubt, therefore, that the * δ recension can be credited with introducing some fabulous elements into the story of Alexander. Although Merv and Samarkand predate Alexander,

46 David Konstan, "The Alexander Romance: The Cunning of the Open Text", *Lexis* 16 (1998): 123–138.

47 Budge, *History of Alexander*, 72, n. 1.

48 Marian Plezia, "Legenda o smoku wawelskim", *Rocznik Krakowski* 42 (1971): 21–33; Daniel Ogden, "Sekander, Dragon-Slayer", in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson and Ian R. Netton (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2012), 291–292.

these cities bloomed in the later Sasanian age,⁴⁹ hence inclusion of the stories of the founding of Margiôs/Mârô and Sôd/Sogd is probably of late origin. Foundation of Alexandria Margiana (Merv) features prominently in Medieval Iranian sources,⁵⁰ probably after the AR. By including them and remarking on the temple of Nâni, i.e. Nanaya, a goddess attested profusely in Iran, very popular in the Kushan empire and invoked in the Rabatak inscription of Kanishka I, and best known perhaps due to the attack of Antiochus IV on her Elymaean temple,⁵¹ the Syriac author demonstrated his knowledge of eastern Iran.

But the story bound to gain the greatest resonance is that of Alexander's journey to China. It is utterly fictitious, as neither the historical Alexander ever made it so far, nor is there a shred of evidence of the knowledge of China in Alexander's court or any reflection of Alexander's exploits in contemporary Chinese sources.⁵² The Chinese episode was born only after trade between China and the West, and some limited cultural exchange with it, became important enough to attribute to Alexander exploits beyond the eastern borders of India, in historical reality never reached by him. This episode does not betray any detailed knowledge of China, other than that silk was a typical product of this country. The city Alexander reaches is called Kâtôn, which is probably a distorted name of the caravan-city of Khotan, on the Silk Road, in what is now Chinese region of Xinkiang but what in late antiquity was a largely independent Kingdom of Khotien, a Saka-speaking, i.e. an ethnically largely East Iranian state, albeit always heavily influenced by the Chinese. No surprise then, that the Chinese official who interviews Alexander bears the name Gundâphâr, best attested for an Indo-Parthian king Gondophares of the 1st c. AD.⁵³ In this episode China is but a name and the whole episode is composed of stock elements, be it exotic products of China passed to Alexander as gifts from its king, or Alexander impersonating his ambassador, yet again. The strong presence of

49 Georgina Herrmann et al., "The International Merv Project: Preliminary Report on the First Season (1992)", *Iran* 31 (1993): 39–62.

50 Getzel M. Cohen, *The Hellenistic Settlements in the East from Armenia and Mesopotamia to Bactria and India* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2012), 246–247.

51 2 Macc., 1.13–17.

52 Gościwit Malinowski, "Alexander the Great and China", in *Alexander the Great and the East: History, Art, Tradition*, ed. Krzysztof Nawotka and Agnieszka Wojciechowska (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016), 151–157.

53 Boyle, "Alexander Romance", 17; Adrian D.H. Bivar, "Gondophares", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Last Updated: February 17, 2012. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/gondophares>.

eastern Iranian and Chinese episodes in the Syriac AR are obviously late additions to the story of Alexander and eastern Syria, not necessarily derived from the intermediate Middle Persian AR as Nöldeke thought. They were surely readily accessible within folk tales circulating in multicultural centres like Edessa and Nisibis, located on major trade routes from Iran, India and China;⁵⁴ one of them is most likely the place in which they were introduced into the narrative of the Syriac AR.⁵⁵

Even if Nöldeke's Middle Persian AR is but a phantom, Alexander the Great features prominently in New (Classical) Persian literature. There are in fact two divergent streaks in Iranian literary tradition on Alexander: the original Zoroastrian and the one anchored in the AR. The Zoroastrian depiction of Alexander, surviving in the few Zoroastrian books which survived to our times, principally in the *Ardāy Wirāz Nāmāg*, and also in the *Greater Bundahišn*, in the *Denkard*, in the *Zand i Wahman Yasn*, and indirectly also in these Arabic authors who had accessed Iranian oral or written tradition, like Ṭabari,⁵⁶ is overwhelmingly negative with the gravest accusation heaped on Alexander, the enemy of Iran and of the true religion.⁵⁷ A trace of this tradition survived also in the *Šāh-nāma* where Alexander, in principal a rightful king and warrior, is occasionally called *gizistag*.⁵⁸ Although anchored in the Iranian authentic oral tradition, the Zoroastrian image of Alexander is dependent on the AR too. Says the *Ardāy Wirāz Nāmāg*: "Then the accursed, wicked Evil Spirit deluded the accursed (*gizistag*) Alexander the Roman, who lived in Egypt, in order to cause the people to have doubt about this religion".⁵⁹ In Persian writing of that day, any enemy from the West was a Roman, and so was Alexander. Of significance is that he had lived in Egypt prior to invading Iran: this apocryphal detail can be derived only from the AR story of Alexander's Egyptian father Nectanebo making Alexander an Egyptian too. Other direct or indirect borrowings from

54 Amir Harrak, "Trade Routes and Christianization of the Near East", *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 2 (2002): 46–61; Shepardson, "Syria, Syriac", 458.

55 Frye, "Two Iranian", 187.

56 Ṭabari, 1.577; Macuch, "Pseudo-Callisthenes" 227–228; El-Sayyed M. Gad, "Al-Tabari's Tales of Alexander: History and Romance", in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson and Ian R. Netton (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2012), 227.

57 Yarshater, "Iranian National", 472–473; Kotwal and Kreyenbroek, "Alexander the Great," Wiesehöfer, "'Accursed' and 'Adventurer'".

58 Haila Manteghi, "Alexander the Great in the *Shāhnāmah* of Ferdowsi", in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson and Ian R. Netton (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2012), 163.

59 *Ardāy Wirāz Nāmāg*, 1.1; tr. Bailey.

AR, certainly from its Syriac version, are traceable in Ṭabari too, e.g. the story of the gifts Darius sent to Alexander, sesame seeds being one of them, or in the list of the cities Alexander founded.⁶⁰

The proper AR line of Alexander stories in New Persian literature is later and much better attested in many works of poetry and prose, among which are six books written between the 11th and the 15th c. and devoted *in toto* or in part to adventure tales of Alexander which have gained the greatest prominence: (the Alexander section of) the *Šāh-nāma* of Ferdowsī (1010), the *Šarāf-nāma* and *Eqbāl-nāma* of Niẓāmī (1191), the *Ḳerad-nāma-ye eskandarī* of Jāmī (1484/1485), the *Dārāb-nāma* of Ṭārsūsī (11th–12th c.), and the anonymous 12th–14th c. *Eskandar-nāma*.⁶¹ The section concerned with Alexander, or Sekandar/Iskander, as he is called in New Persian literature in general, in the Persian national *epos* the *Šāh-nāma* is ca. 3,000 distichs long and it shows the closest affinity with the Syriac AR of all Persian literary works of the Middle Ages. The story of Alexander follows upon the tale of two Kayanid kings of Iran, Darab and Dara, the second broadly identifiable with Darius III, the first one perhaps with Darius I.⁶² Thus it forms a part of the Iranian ‘National History’, a legendary cycle in fact linking the mythical past with more recent history of Iran under the Sasanians.⁶³

Alexander is brought into the history of the Kayanids with Darab’s victory over Filqus the king of Greece, the imposition of a tribute on him and marrying his daughter Nahid. Very soon Darab sends back to her father Nahid pregnant with his child, Iskander, who is then raised by Filqus as if he was his son. The reason of Darab’s disaffection for Nahid is her bad breath, an Iranian-Zoroastrian addition to the story signifying her impurity.⁶⁴ Darab has another

60 Ṭabari, 1.573 and 1.578; Michel M. Mazzaoui, “Alexander the Great and the Arab Historians”, in *Graeco-Arabica: International Congress on Greek and Arabic Studies* (Athens: Association for Greek and Arabic Studies, 1991), vol. IV: 36–37.

61 William L. Hanaway, “Eskandar-nāma”, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Last Updated: January 19, 2012. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/eskandar-nama>.

62 Ehsan Yarshater, “Were the Sasanians heirs to the Achaemenids?”, in: *Atti del Convegno internazionale sul tema: La Persia nel Medioevo. (Roma, 31 marzo–5 aprile 1970)* (Rome: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1971), 519–520; Touraj Daryaee, “National History or Keyanid History? The Nature of Sasanid Zoroastrian Historiography”, *Iranian Studies* 28 (1995): 134.

63 Minoo S. Southgate, “Portrait of Alexander in Persian Alexander-Romances of the Islamic Era”, *JAOS* 97 (1977): 280; Wiesehöfer, “‘Accursed’ and ‘Adventurer’”.

64 Julia Rubanovich, “Why So Many Stories? Untangling the Versions of Iskandar’s Birth and Upbringing”, in: *Orality and Textuality in the Iranian World: Patterns of Interaction across the Centuries*, ed. Julia Rubanovich (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 207–212.

son, Dara, the half-brother of Alexander. Apart from the names Dara (Darius) and Filqus, i.e. Philip, everything in this story is fiction, in a strange way reworking motives from AR: in both accounts Philip/Filqus pays tribute to the king of Persia in form of golden eggs.⁶⁵ Alexander is not a Greek, even if destined to rule Greece. The *Šāh-nāma* and other Iranian romances alter the AR story of Alexander's birth, skipping the Egyptian *logos* with Nectanebo as father of Alexander: it was of importance in Egypt where it originated but irrelevant in Iran and, moreover, offensive to the Muslim reader on account of its polytheistic and magical overtones.⁶⁶ If Alexander was to become a legitimate king of Iran, he had to become Iranian and a Kayanid, at least on his father's side.⁶⁷ He is further anchored in the national history of Iran in the scene of reconciliation with Darius in which the Christian phrase of the dying Darius "in thy hands I leave my spirit" of the Syriac AR, in the *Šāh-nāma* becomes Zoroastrian "I commend my soul to the pure Yazdān".⁶⁸ Elsewhere in the *Šāh-nāma* Ferdowsi keeps the Christianized image of Alexander borrowed from the Syriac tradition, not drawing differences between Zoroastrian, Christian and Muslim facets of his hero.⁶⁹ Alexander of the *Šāh-nāma* kills a dragon in the same way as in the Syriac AR and visits the Emperor of China, also in the guise of his ambassador. Stories are transformed in line with cultural and political reality of the Middle Ages: Kandake of Meroe becomes Qaydāfeh of Andalusia but she still outwits Alexander, blowing his disguise with the help of a portrait painted for her in secret, and the whole episode acquires deeper meaning with Kandake—the ideal ruler admonishing Alexander.⁷⁰ Tales were added to the story-line, drawn from folklore or from different traditions, notably that of Alexander's search for the Water of Life, most likely of Indian origin,⁷¹ or that of Alexander building a wall against Yajuj and Majuj, i.e. Gog and Magog, drawn from Syriac literature, be it the *Exploits of Alexander* or Ps.-Methodius.⁷²

65 Syriac AR I.23; Budge, *History of Alexander*, 31.

66 Rubanovich, "Why So Many", 205–206.

67 Gaillard, *Alexandre le Grand*, 22–28.

68 Macuch, "Pseudo-Callisthenes", 232.

69 Macuch, "Pseudo-Callisthenes", 257–259.

70 Rubanovich, "Re-writing", 132.

71 Aleksandra Szalc, "In Search of Water of Life: The Alexander Romance and Indian Mythology", In *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson and Ian R. Netton (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2012), 327–338.

72 Czeglédy, "Syriac legend" and Gero, "Legend of Alexander", 6–8, respectively.

It is generally agreed that for most of episodes the *Šāh-nāma* and later New Persian romances relied on an Arabic intermediary from the Syriac AR.⁷³ Yet the source tradition on Alexander is complex with Persian *Romances* and medieval historians of Iran including Alexander among Kayanid kings which suggests pre-Islamic roots probably in late Sasanian *Xʷaday-Namag*.⁷⁴ Ferdowsi freely drew upon Iranian and Indian mythology and folklore and Syriac *Exploits of Alexander*, making Alexander the culture hero of medieval Iran, even if in later Iranian version of the story of Alexander the national Iranian and Zoroastrian traits were gradually erased and replaced by universally Muslim features of Alexander the Dhū al-Qarnayn.⁷⁵

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73 Doufikaer-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus*, 13.

74 Manteghi, "Alexander the Great", 162–164; Rubanovich, "Why So Many", 203–204.

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PART 3

“Modern” and Postmodern Receptions



Alexander and Napoleon*

Agnieszka Fulińska

The paradox of the Napoleonic age Alexander is that many seem to talk of Alexander, but Alexander is relatively absent in the period in the official discourse, especially when compared to early modern art and literature. The question of associations is not obvious, either. Ever since 1804 and the establishment of the French Empire, the emphasis on the emulation of the ancients had been waning in the official image and propaganda: Napoleon wished to be remembered as himself, the Emperor of the French, and not a modern Alexander or Caesar,¹ just like Louis XIV over a century before.² Nonetheless, according to the legend, he had been greeted in early age by the Corsican hero Pasquale Paoli as “l’homme de Plutarque,”³ and he never escaped the employment of ancient comparisons and associations in an age when, in the words of one of Napoleon’s greatest adversaries, “the mania for parallels had been a real evil for history.”⁴

Traces of Alexander’s history and legend can be found in various documents from the period, related to the person and exploits of both Bonaparte as the general of the Republican army and the First Consul of the Republic,

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- 1 The rejection of ancient models is most clearly pronounced in the letter from Schönbrunn, dated to Oct. 3rd, 1809, addressed to Michel Duroc, Duc de Frioul (*Correspondance générale* XIX/15894, “Note sur des inscriptions proposées pour l’Arc de triomphe”). Napoleon criticizes there the Roman emperors for having defiled the title “Caesar”, of which only Julius Caesar himself was worthy, and announces that “Le titre de l’Empereur est celui d’Empereur des Français.” Cf. Annie Jourdan, *Napoléon: héros, imperator, mécène* (Paris: Aubier, 1998), 185.
- 2 See Wolf Burchard, *The Sovereign Artist. Charles Le Brun and the Image of Louis XIV* (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2017), 45, on the turn from the employment of classical allegories to “focus on the king himself” in the official image of Louis XIV.
- 3 Recorded e.g. in *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, May 29th, 1816 [p. 691]: “O Napoléon! tu n’as rien de modern! tu appartiens tout-à-fait à Plutarque!” All quotations from the *Mémorial* after the critical edition: E. De Las Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, préface de J. Tulard, présentation et notes J. Schmidt (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1968).
- 4 *Memoirs of Prince Metternich, 1773–1815*, edited by Prince Richard Metternich, trans. Mrs. Alexander [Robina] Napier, vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1880), 284.

and Napoleon as the Emperor.⁵ Apparently the first one to openly compare Napoleon to both Alexander and Caesar was the famous French orientalist and philosopher, Constantin François de Volney, who had met the young Bonaparte in 1792, and four years later, in the time of the first Italian campaign, is said to have commented to the French *émigrés* in the United States that “Pour peu que les circonstances le secondent, ce sera la tête de César sur les épaules d’Alexandre”.⁶ In 1800, the most prominent British pro-French politician, Charles James Fox, claimed that Napoleon “surpassed Alexander and Caesar”⁷—the comparison was becoming a commonplace.

When in 1810 Thomas Jefferson wrote to John Langdon on the rumours concerning a possible French invasion of America, he devoted a whole paragraph to an elaborate parallel between Napoleon and Alexander:

The fear that Bonaparte will come over to us and conquer us also, is too chimerical to be genuine. Supposing him to have finished Spain and Portugal, he has yet England and Russia to subdue. (...) These two subdued, (...) ancient Greece and Macedonia, the cradle of Alexander, his prototype, and Constantinople, the seat of empire for the world, would glitter more in his eye than our bleak mountains and rugged forests. Egypt, too, and the golden apples of Mauritania, have for more than half a century fixed the longing eyes of France; and with Syria, you know, he has an old affront to wipe out. Then come ‘Pontus and Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,’ the fine countries on the Euphrates and Tigris, the Oxus and Indus, and all beyond the Hyphasis, which bounded the glories of his Macedonian rival; with the invitations of his new British subjects on the banks of the Ganges, whom, after receiving under his protection the mother country, he cannot refuse to visit.⁸

5 Very characteristic for this attitude is the remark by Auguste de Chambure, *Napoléon et ses contemporains, suite de gravures représentant des traits d’héroïsme, de clémence, de générosité, de popularité* (Paris: Bossange Frères, 1824), vi: “Nous avons comparé les annales des siècles passés à l’histoire de nos jours, et nous avons abandonné l’idée de vanter les anciens. Nous aussi, nous sommes-nous dit, nous avons nos César, nos Annibal, nos Alexandre; et si un gouffre nouveau venait à s’entr’ouvrir, nous aussi nous aurions nos Curtius!”

6 Adolphe Bossange, *Notice sur la vie et les écrits de C.-F. Volney*, in: *Oeuvres complètes de C.-F. Volney*, vol. 1 (Paris: Bossange Frères, 1821), xxviii.

7 Leslie Mitchell, *Charles James Fox* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 167.

8 Thomas Jefferson to governor John Langdon, Monticello 5 March 1810, in: Saul K. Padover, *A Jefferson Profile as Revealed in His Letters* (New York: J. Day Co., 1956), 191.

Modern perspective invites comparisons, too. In the assessment of François de Polignac that “the myth of Alexander is (...) far more than a wild fabrication. A study of the sources reveals that in fact, the original author of the myth was often Alexander himself. He did not hesitate to construct his own legend by directing the presentation and dissemination of his story in accordance with his political designs, thereby providing later generations with both material and instructions for continually rewriting the myth”⁹—one could easily replace Alexander with Napoleon, and the words would remain perfectly applicable. In a number of cases it is the general resemblance of circumstances that may suggest that the presence of ancient models in the mind frame of the period was so strong that it produced actions apparently echoing the past, or easily presented as such. Bonaparte’s Augustan seizure of power after the Egyptian campaign makes a fine example, as well as the emulation, in the Near Eastern expedition, of the legend concerning the presence of scientists and explorers on Alexander’s Indian expedition; in the same line lies the Carolingian character of the 1804 coronation.¹⁰ All this invites stereotyped assumptions, based on the prominence of Alexander in European culture until the 18th century, but ungrounded in actual source material, like the following capturing pronouncements: “Centuries later (...) Napoleon Bonaparte would arrive on the same shores [of Egypt], declare himself a new Alexander, and vow to reverse all the damage which Octavian had done” and “Napoleon had always fancied himself a new Alexander”.¹¹

Undoubtedly though, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries Alexander had been a commonplace to a much greater extent than nowadays, which resulted in easy comparisons. He was one of the most readily exploited ancient figures, providing model for both virtues and vices, but also for extraordinary exploits, and therefore he did serve as model, association and allegorical image for Napoleon. Before discussing these particular receptions in texts and art, a short overview of the main attitudes to Alexander and of the material available in the period is due, because this is what to a great extent shaped the views on Alexander expressed by Napoleon and his contemporaries.

9 François de Polignac, “From the Mediterranean to Universality? The myth of Alexander, yesterday and today”, *Mediterranean Historical Review* 14/1 (1999): 1.

10 Charlemagne, as an association closer in time and space, was the most suitable association to be exploited openly; see Christine Dousset-Seiden, “La Nation française et l’Antiquité à l’époque napoléonienne”, *Anabases* 1 (2005): 73; cf. Metternich, *Memoirs*, 275: “His heroes were Alexander, Caesar, and, above all, Charlemagne.”

11 Anthony Pagden, *Worlds at War: The 2,500—Year Struggle Between East and West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 74 and 318 resp.

Background

The models of reception of Alexander that were available in France in the age of Napoleon were discussed in detail by Pierre Briant,¹² and in their vast majority they varied between the two main attitudes: the positive image derived from Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*,¹³ and the negative one constructed in its opposition by the baron de Sainte-Croix in his *Examen des anciens historiens d'Alexandre le Grand*.¹⁴ The main point of difference between these two views is the evaluation of Alexander's conquests from the perspectives other than military, i.e. cultural and commercial in the first place. Montesquieu presented Alexander as the cultural hero, whose conquests had been based on rational principles, and whose aim was the establishment of cooperation between the East and the West, as well as of commercial routes between Europe and Asia. Contrary to this view, Sainte-Croix rejected the optimistic notion of the conquest as the means of transmission of Greek culture to the East, put into doubt the relevance of cities founded in Asia as commercial centres, and saw Alexander in the first place as the overambitious leader, whose main motivation was his own glory and military victories. The 1781 translator of Curtius Rufus' *History of Alexander*, Nicolas Beauzée, secretary to the comte d'Artois, the youngest brother of Louis XVI and prospective Charles X, went even further in his negative opinion on Alexander. In the dedicatory letter to the duc d'Angoulême, the count's son, he rejected Alexander as a model for the descendant of Saint Louis, and considered even a comparison between the two monarchs undignified, for the following reasons: "[Alexandre] n'a point d'autre motif que sa vanité, point d'autre droit que son épée, point d'autre règle que ses passions, point d'autre vertu qu'une valeur brutale et souvent téméraire; (...) inspira souvent à ses amis la défiance, le mépris, la terreur: la Terre, dévastée par le brigandage et déshonorée par les crimes d'Alexandre, se tut devant lui, et n'a jamais vu ses imitateurs qu'avec des sentiments d'effroi (...)"¹⁵ Worthy of note is that the same two per-

12 Pierre Briant, *Alexandre des Lumières. Fragments d'histoire européenne* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012; English edition: *The First European. A History of Alexander in the Age of Empire*, trans. N. Elliott, Cambridge MA/London, 2017). The attitudes of the historians from the period of ca. 1795–1830 are discussed in the chapter XIII (421–454), but relevant information is dispersed throughout the volume. The following passage is based mostly on this work, since no other relevant recent scholarship on the topic is available.

13 X.13–14; XXI.8.

14 Published originally in 1771, reprinted with amendments in 1775 and 1804; for the comparison of the three versions see Briant, *Alexandre*, 130.

15 *Épître, à Monseigneur le duc d'Angoulême*, in *Histoire d'Alexandre le Grand par Quinte-*

spectives would be employed for Napoleon ever since his ascent to power and until today, and Beauzée's description sounds as if anti-Napoleonic propaganda had used it as a ready model.

Even if in comparison to earlier periods Alexander had ceased to be a major subject of historical reflexion already under the Revolution,¹⁶ he never disappeared entirely from the academic discourse, let alone popular imagination and general education, and never lost his appeal as a commonplace for comparisons of modern politics and prominent individuals, in the broad period of the Revolution/Consulate/Empire and afterwards. The two aforementioned views formed the core for contemporary discussions, e.g. around the nomination of the work of Sainte-Croix for the decennial prize in literature in 1809.¹⁷ Critical response to this candidature involved not only the doubts expressed about literary merits of the work, but also its content and presented attitude.

Of consequence for the Napoleonic Alexander, even if not of broad renown either in its own age, or later, must have been the work by Linguet, *Histoire du Siècle d'Alexandre* (1762). Pierre Briant describes it as an application of Voltaire's declaration, expressed in the introduction to the *Siècle de Louis XIV*, where the age of Philip and Alexander is listed as the first of the four periods in world history called "âges heureux où les arts ont été perfectionnés".¹⁸ However, much greater impact must be ascribed to the popular multi-volume work by Charles Rollin *Histoire ancienne* (first published in 1730–1738), that became the main textbook for schools, and as we will see later, was read and commented upon by Napoleon himself.

Rollin's attitude is generally negative towards the conquests of Alexander, but it appears that Briant oversimplifies his attitude. What can be read from Rollin's account, apart from the military and political history, is the role that

Curce, traduite par M. Beauzée ... (Paris: Barbou, 1781), i–ii; quoted in Chantal Grell and Christian Michel, *L'École des princes ou Alexandre disgracié. Essai sur la mythologie monarchique de la France absolutiste* (Paris: Société d'Édition « Les belles lettres », 1988), 205.

16 Briant, *Alexandre*, 431, supports the notion, upheld also by the present author, that Alexander is largely absent from the ancient associations after 1789.

17 Briant, *Alexandre*, 144–147.

18 Briant, *Alexandre*, 116. The novelty and importance of Linguet's work lies in the first place in its interest with the history, politics and culture of the lands conquered by Alexander, and its comparative method. Linguet subscribed to the notion, not too popular in the 18th century, but supported by Voltaire, that one of the reasons for the facility with which Alexander had conquered both Persia and Egypt, was the poor state in which these kingdoms found themselves politically (tyranny and a sequence of weak rulers resp.).

Alexander played in the development of arts, and as statesman; he is mentioned in the chapters devoted to the greatest artists of his time, like Apelles and Lysippus, and Rollin takes great care to emphasize the notion that unlike conquests, their achievements are the lasting imprint that Alexander had made on the world.¹⁹

Despite the relatively scarce interest in Alexander at the turn of the 18th and 19th century, the period saw, apart from the re-editions of the aforementioned works, also the publication of new source material, out of which the most important is Arrian's *Alexander's Anabasis*. All this, together with the presence of Alexander in art of the earlier periods, in paintings and sculptures decorating the palaces and other public buildings, formed the background against which one has to analyse the Napoleonic receptions in official and popular art and literature.²⁰

Texts

18th century classical education and the dominating neo-classical tendencies in both art and literature of the period supplied the authors of numerous pamphlets and panegyric poems on the one hand, and critical or satirical works on the other hand, with ready associations and comparisons. Since the textual material is enormous, and rarely of major literary value, and, moreover, many texts repeat the established *topoi* almost mechanically, only representative cases of in depth exploitation of the motif will be discussed in detail.

To present the framework of these selected texts, it suffices to quote a small compilation of remarks, in chronological order, such as the dedication to the work on the monuments of Paris by the architect Baltard and the historian Amaury-Duval: "A Napoléon Bonaparte. Nouveau Periclès (...) Les guerrieres le nomment Alexandre, les philosophes Marc Aurèle, les artistes Médicis, tout le peuple le genie tutelaire de la France";²¹ poetic comparison by Vincenzo

19 This notion was widespread in the enlightened 18th century, and applied to all the established "great rulers", in France's case usually Alexander, Caesar, Augustus and posthumously Louis XIV.

20 On the decorative programme of the Tuileries under the Consulate, and the gallery of illustrious persons from the past, with Alexander among them, see Jourdan, *Napoléon*, 210–213.

21 [Louis-Pierre] Baltard, Amaury-Duval [Charles-Alexandre-Amaury Pineux, dit], *Paris et ses monuments* (Paris: chez l'auteur, 1803), dedicatory page.

Jacobacci: “Nuovo Alessandro in guerra, in pace Augusto”;²² Stendhal’s eulogy in the *Vie de Napoléon*, written ca. 1818–1819: “Un jeune homme de vingt-six ans se trouve avoir effacé en une année les Alexandre, les César, les Annibal, les Frédéric” and, in the concluding chapter of the book:

C’est un homme doué de talents extraordinaires et d’une dangereuse ambition, l’être le plus admirable par ses talents qui ait paru depuis César, sur lequel il nous semble l’emporter. Il est plutôt fait pour supporter l’adversité avec fermeté et majesté que pour soutenir la prospérité sans s’en laisser enivrer. Emporté jusqu’à la fureur quand on contrarie ses passions, mais plus susceptible d’amitié que de haine durable, entaché de quelques-uns des vices indispensables à un conquérant, mais non pas plus prodigue de sang ni plus indifférent envers l’humanité que les César, les Alexandre, les Frédéric, gens auprès desquels on le placera et dont la gloire va tomber tous les jours.²³

or the surprisingly inverted sequence of heroes in the memoirs written by an American doctor travelling in Europe in the 1840s: “the hieroglyphics on one side of the needle, or obelisk, are exclusively devoted to a narration of the deeds of the famous Egyptian conqueror, that other Napoleon or Alexander, Sesostris”.²⁴

The work that requires some more attention is an unusual biography of Napoleon, published by baron Antoine-Henri Jomini, one of the greatest military theorists of the 19th century. It is written in the form of a “dialogue of the dead”, in which the spirit of Napoleon is brought by Charon to Hades, where he is welcomed and interrogated by the greatest commanders in history: Alexander, Caesar and Frederick the Great.²⁵ The judges ask questions that somehow relate to their own careers, therefore “Alexandre, qui des montagnes de la Macédoine a couru jusque dans l’Inde, mais qui a su en revenir victorieux” wants to know the reasons of the disastrous retreat from Moscow.²⁶ The “judges” are

22 Vincenzo Jacobacci, *A Napoleone il Grande pel suo arrivo in Milano nel novembre del 1807*, printed pamphlet, 1807 (Parma, Museo Glauco Lombardi, inv. 1798).

23 Stendhal, *Napoléon. Vie de Napoléon, Mémoires sur Napoléon. Édition établie et présentée par Catherine Mariette* (Paris: Stock, 1998), 22 and 190 resp. The work was published posthumously.

24 Valentine Mott, *Travels in Europe and the East* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1842), 317.

25 This triad is an apparent commonplace, cf. e.g. Stendhal’s comparisons, *supra*.

26 Antoine-Henri de Jomini, *Vie politique et militaire de Napoléon, racontée par lui même, au tribunal de César, d’Alexandre et de Frédéric*, vol. 1–IV (Paris: Anselin, 1827), vol. 1, 4.

then absent from the narrative until the very end of the last volume; however, just as the story had opened with accusations for mistakes, it closes with the praise for the good deeds, and Alexander commends Napoleon for having pardoned the vanquished enemies. The whole work ends with a very particular happy ending: “Depuis ce moment les quatre héros sont inséparables, et leurs entretiens d’où découle une source inépuisable d’instruction politique des ombres illustres qui habitent l’Elysée”.²⁷

Alexander’s role is as instrumental in this biographical account as in the simpler comparisons, and mostly gives yet another piece of evidence to the main train of Alexander’s reception—as the model warrior. The concept of making the three military leaders the judges in the Underworld is novel, but unfortunately not developed beyond the trait that will play a certain role in the Napoleon/Alexander relationship, especially in art: clemency towards enemies. The closing image of the four heroes in the Elysium finds its analogy in popular apotheoses, which would eagerly employ the motif of Napoleon being greeted in the afterlife by the heroes of the past, usually including, among others, the three judges from this text (Fig. 22.1). The positive verdict and actual heroization of Napoleon in the conclusion earned Jomini’s work enthusiastic reception from a representative of the most fervent group of supporters of the Empire, an anonymous former imperial officer, who praised in the first place the choice of judges—“ces trois colosses de gloire, sur les traces desquels il a si long-temps marché pour conquérir comme eux l’immortalité”.²⁸

Despite some departures into other traits, in most instances Alexander is in the first place the model of the great warrior and victorious military leader, while comparisons to other ancient personages are used in order to eulogize the modern hero’s other virtues. Jomini offers a slightly more elaborate use of the figure of Alexander, but it serves in the first place as a decorative instrument of heroization by association. Most texts do not go beyond such devices, and therefore supply very little as far as the reception of the figure of Alexander is concerned. More sophisticated approach that takes into consideration other aspects of the history and legend of Alexander can be found in the writings of Napoleon himself, in the memoirs of one of his secretaries, Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourienne, and of one of his major fascinated critics, François-René de Chateaubriand.

²⁷ Jomini, *Vie politique*, vol. IV, 644.

²⁸ *Considérations sur l’ouvrage intitulé: Vie politique et militaire de Napoléon, par le général baron de Jomini par un ancien officier supérieur* (Paris: Anselin, 1835), 14.



FIGURE 22.1 *François Georgin (designer), Jean-Baptiste Thiébault (engraver), Apotheosis of Napoleon, printed by Nicolas Pellerin of Épinal, 1834. The caption reads among others: "L'Apothéose présente en analyse les grands hommes et les héros de l'ancien et du nouvel âge: Sésostris, Alexandre, César, Gengiskan, Bayard, Turenne, Frédéric II; les braves généraux Kléber, Desaix, Hoche, Lassale, Ney, et une foule des chefs et soldats qui ont partagé ses dangers et ses triomphes: tous saluent de leur lauriers le grand Napoléon, qu'ils se plaisent à reconnaître comme le génie qui les a surpassés (...). Aucun des grands hommes de tous les âges peuvent-ils être mis en parallèle avec l'Homme du XIX^e siècle? (...) Il pourrait soutenir la comparaison avec les rois fameux, ces illustres capitaines, ces sages législateurs, tous réunis: à lui seul il les éclipsé tous. (...) C'est au Créateur de l'Empire que la France doit ses lois, ses monuments et sa gloire; il l'a conduite au temple de l'Immortalité!" The image was taken from an anonymous aquatint (printed by Dopter, Paris), which showed a smaller number of persons, and the figure of Alexander was added in this popular rendition.*

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Napoleon's Alexander

Early writings of Bonaparte from the years before the *coup d'état* of 18 Brumaire and the establishment of the Consulate in 1799, give some ideas about the notions formed by the school and his own readings. Napoleon's education was typical for the 18th century, and abounded in the study of the ancient authors translated into French, among whom the central position was occu-

pied by Plutarch. The young Bonaparte, in the preparatory school at Brienne, at the École Militaire in Paris, and later on the leisurely first commissions in Valence and Auxonne, would allegedly devour books, particularly of history.²⁹ Among the manuscripts from that time, two texts testify to the interest in antiquity: notes on Rollin's ancient history, and *Discours sur la question proposée par l'académie de Lyon* (1791), being a contribution to a writing contest, proposed by Guillaume-Thomas François Raynal, on the topic of "what truths and sentiments ought to be instilled in men for their happiness".³⁰

The former makes only a cursory note on the territory of Macedonia, a remark that the death of Alexander marks the beginning of the "third age" in Greek history, and mentions the foundation of Alexandria in the chapter on Egyptian history, even though the numerous volumes of *L'histoire ancienne* abound in mentions of Alexander. One must note, however, that most great leaders of Greece and Rome are absent from Bonaparte's commentary: the focus is on political systems and laws, and also on the civilizations prior to Greece and Rome or on the margin of the classical world.³¹ This is fairly surprising in a young officer, and one may only wonder what impact could have had the following words by Rollin himself, when he compares the achievements of political and military leaders to those of artists and scientists: "De quelle utilité sont aujourd'hui pour nous ou Nemrod, ou Cyrus, ou Alexandre? Tous ces grands noms, toutes ces victoires qui ont étonné les hommes de temps en temps, tous ces princes, tous ces conquérans, tous ces magnificences, tous ces grands desseins, sont rentrés dans le néant à notre égard; ce sont des vapeurs qui se sont dissipées, et des fantômes qui se sont évanouis".³² Rollin's view of Alexander, as not only the military leader, but the friend of arts and sciences, and emphasis on this trait of a good king that permeates his work, may have inspired Bonaparte, whose lifelong ambition had become to be remembered in the first place as statesman, lawgiver, and patron of culture and academia, rather than conqueror.³³

29 Arthur Chuquet, *La jeunesse de Napoléon. Brienne* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1898), 89, 129–130.

30 Published in Napoléon Bonaparte, *Oeuvres littéraires et écrits militaires*, ed. J. Tulard, vol. I–III (Paris: Bibliothèque des Introuvables, 2001), vol. I, 91–137, and vol. II, 195–232, resp.

31 Major parts are devoted to Egypt, Carthage, Assyria and Persia, with the notes on Cyrus, Xerxes, Hannibal, as well as to Scythia; Greek subjects are almost entirely limited to laws and customs.

32 Quoted from the edition: *Histoire ancienne de Charles Rollin*, vol. XIV (Paris: Raynal Librairie, 1830), 112.

33 Briant, *L'Alexandre*, 319, sees in Rollin only a vulgarised image of Alexander, but the emphasis given to the cultural role defies this opinion, and the views on Alexander

The *Discours* brings partial answer to the aforementioned possible influence of Rollin's vision, when Bonaparte characterizes Alexander in the passage devoted to ambition: "L'ambition, ce désir immodéré de contenter l'orgueil ou l'intempérance, qui n'est jamais satisfait, qui mène Alexandre de Thèbes en Perse, du Granique à Issus, d'Issus à Arbelle, de là dans l'Inde; l'ambition qui lui fait conquérir et ravager le monde pour ne pas la satisfaire; le même feu l'embrase; dans son délire, il ne sait plus quel cours lui donner; il s'agite, il s'égare ... Alexandre ... se croit un dieu; il se croit le fils de Jupiter, il veut le faire croire aux autres." The subsequent passages list other examples of destructive ambition: Charles V, Philip II of Spain, Louis XIV, Cromwell, Richelieu—the latter is even directly compared to Alexander: "La même folie qui altéra la cervelle d'Alexandre, produite par la même cause, s'empare de Richelieu. Il veut être un autre Bacchus, il veut être cru saint".³⁴

A different, more positive view is presented in an earlier essay on patriotism, written during a short stay in Corsica in 1787: "Notre âme s'enflamme sans doute au récit des actions de Philippe, Alexandre, Charlemagne, Turenne, Condé, Machiavelli et tant d'autres hommes illustres qui, dans leur héroïque carrière, eurent pour guide l'estime des hommes; mais quel sentiment maîtrise notre âme à l'aspect de Léonidas et de ses trois cents Spartiates?".³⁵ This inclusion of the two Macedonian kings at the side of the great French heroes in the first place, undoubtedly testifies for their importance in the educational programme, but again they serve mostly as examples, not subjects of a deeper reflexion. The two quoted views correspond with the two views on Alexander inherited from the 18th century.

Other instances, when Alexander appears in Bonaparte's early writings are superficial, and have exemplary character; if anything, they give a general idea of his interest and versatility in ancient history and writings thereupon. Some of them, however, point at a fascination with the person of the Macedonian conqueror as a model, especially for the young Bonaparte. In the exhortation issued to the army of the Mediterranean on the eve of the Egyptian campaign from the board of the *Orient*, on June 22nd, 1798, Alexander is naturally evoked as the founder of Alexandria, and the suggestion is made that the conquest of Egypt will equate the French army with the ancient Macedonians: "La première ville que nous allons rencontrer a été bâtie par Alexandre. Nous trouverons à chaque

dispersed through the whole enormous work, even if not ground-breaking, appear as surprisingly complex.

34 Bonaparte, *Oeuvres*, vol. II, pp. 227–228.

35 "Parallèle entre l'amour de la patrie et l'amour de la gloire", in Bonaparte, *Oeuvres*, vol. I, 69.

pas des souvenirs dignes d'exciter l'émulation des Français".³⁶ Out of other cursory remarks, for a general idea of Napoleon's knowledge of Alexander's history and legend, worthwhile is the mention in the commentary on Voltaire's *Essai sur les mœurs*, concerning the instances of self-immolation among the Indian philosophers ("Calan se brûla devant Alexandre").³⁷

The Egyptian campaign—if not by anything else, then by its attachment of dozens of scientists to the army, recalling the myths surrounding the oriental enterprise of Alexander—provides us with one more quite unexpected evocation of Alexander, commonly believed in the 19th century to have originated from Napoleon himself.³⁸ In the official *Moniteur Universel* of Nov. 27th, 1798, a dialogue held allegedly between Bonaparte and the Egyptian muftis in the great chamber of the pyramid of Cheops, was published, in which among other titles the French general was addressed by one of the wise men as follows: "Noble successeur de Scander, honneur à tes armes invincibles, et à la foudre inattendue qui sort du milieu de tes guerriers à cheval!" If indeed this publication had been authored or inspired by Bonaparte himself, it would attest his awareness of the oriental legends of Alexander, and a skilful use thereof.

The second great period of Napoleon's literary activity occurs during the exile years in St. Helena (1815–1821), even if the major testimony of his thoughts of that time, the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, is not his own work, but the compilation of notes and memories, taken in the first place by the count Emmanuel de Las Cases and his son, in later editions augmented by memoirs and documents written by other companions of the exile. The work is highly mythologized, and served to construct the Napoleonic legend in the 19th century—a destiny of which Napoleon was aware, and an end towards which he had been actively working.³⁹

36 Bonaparte, *Oeuvres*, vol. III, 208.

37 "Notes tirées de l'*Essai sur les mœurs* par Voltaire", in Bonaparte, *Oeuvres*, vol. II, 166.

38 "Entrevue de Bonaparte, membre de l'Institut national, général en chef de l'armée d'Orient, et de plusieurs muphtis et imans, dans l'intérieur de la grande pyramide, dite pyramide de Chéops", *Gazette nationale, ou, Le Moniteur universel*, No. 67, 7 frimaire an 7 (= Nov. 27, 1798): 272. The text was reproduced in numerous 19th century historical works; in the *Oeuvres choisies de Napoléon. Mises en ordre et précédées d'une Étude littéraire par A. Pujol* (Paris: Belin-Leprieur, 1845): 149, the following note was added to the information about the piece: "On a cru y reconnaître le style de Bonaparte. Dans tous les cas, elle a dû être inspirée par lui." Chateaubriand quotes this piece in his *Mémoires d'outre tombe* (2, 341–342; for the edition used see note 45), but omits this fragment.

39 On the mythological aspects of the *Mémorial* see Robert Morrissey, "The *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène* and the Poetics of Fusion," *Modern Language Notes* 120/4 (2005): 716–732;

Ever since his earliest career Napoleon would bring with him on campaign a considerable number of books, including the classics, and both exiles, on Elba and St. Helena, were no exception.⁴⁰ Ancient historians were among the texts most frequently re-read and discussed with the companions, and the instances in which Alexander is evoked, show three modes of reception: as the great military commander, as one of the models of a great man's career, and as the example of hubris.

The longest commentary on Alexander is included under the date of Nov. 14th, 1816, together with parallel remarks on other great leaders of antiquity, Caesar and Hannibal, out of whom Napoleon apparently valued the latter most, even though he called Alexander and Pyrrhus the greatest masters of war. Alexander and Caesar serve as examples of two antithetical models of career, regarded in the Plutarchan mode of reflexion on the roles of fortune and virtue:

Il n'est pas de grandes actions suivies qui soient l'oeuvre du hasard et de la fortune; elles dèrivent toujours de la combinaison et du génie. Rarement on voit échouer les grands hommes dans leurs entreprises les plus périlleuses. Regardez Alexandre, César, Annibal, le grand Gustave et autres; il réussissent toujours; est-ce parce qu'ils ont du bonheur qu'ils deviennent ainsi de grands hommes? Non; mais parce qu'étant de grands hommes, ils ont sù maîtriser le bonheur. Quand on veut étudier les ressorts de leurs succès, on est tout étonné de voir qu'ils avaient tout fait pour l'obtenir.

Alexandre, à peine au sortir de l'enfance, conquiert, avec une poignée de monde, une partie de globe, mais fut-ce de sa part une simple irruption, une façon de déluge? Non; tout est calculé avec profondeur, exécuté avec audace, conduit avec sagesse. Alexandre se montre tout à la fois grand guerrier, grand politique, grand législateur; malheureusement, quand il atteint le zénith de la gloire et du succès, la tête lui tourne ou le coeur se gâte. Il avait débuté avec l'âme de Trajan; il finit avec le coeur de Néron et les moeurs d'Héliogabale.⁴¹

Göran Blix, Blix, "Heroic Genesis in the Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène", *Yale French Studies* 111 (2007): 107–128.

40 See e.g. 12 volumes of Plutarch in the "bibliothèque de camp", composed by Bonaparte for the Egyptian campaign in 1798 (*Correspondance générale* IV 2458, note 4); the content of Napoleon's library on Elba is discussed in detail by Monica Guarracino, Roberta Martinelli, *Napoleone all'Elba: le biblioteche* (Livorno: Sillabe, 2009).

41 Nov. 14, 1816 [p. 1495]. The antithetical character of the two biographies is based on the

This is the longest statement on Alexander that Napoleon ever made, and it does not depart much from the readings of Plutarch; the ambiguous assessment is characteristic for most of his opinions on historical characters. All three ancient examples, and the discussion of fortune and virtue, serve yet another purpose: in the conclusion of this particular discourse, Napoleon turns to his own fate, in saying: "On a attribué à la fortune mes plus grands actes, et on ne manquera pas d'imputer mes revers à mes fautes" [p. 1497]. Thus, the anecdotic words of Paoli are reflected and come true in Napoleon's own vision of his career, and all the rejection of ancient comparisons is itself denied: by ending the narrative on Plutarch's characters with this short remark on how history is being written in his own time, he equals himself with Plutarch's heroes.

Interestingly, Napoleon's remarks on Alexander and Caesar's lives, as well as his own comparison to the heroes of old, are echoed in the letter that Las Cases wrote to the English Parliament in 1818, after his expulsion from St. Helena, trying to fight the cause of alleviating the imprisonment conditions for Napoleon ("Pétition au Parlement d'Angleterre" [p. 1729]).⁴² The attitude is, however, different, as is the purpose—Las Cases juxtaposes the careers of the two ancient leaders, whose political position had been established in their respective countries, to that of Napoleon, a self-made man: "Quand César médita de gouverner sa patrie, César en était déjà le premier par sa naissance, ses richesses; quand Alexandre entreprit de subjuguier l'Asie, Alexandre était roi et fils d'un roi qui avait préparé ses succès; mais Napoléon, s'élançant de la foule pour gouverner le monde, se présente seul, sans autre auxiliaire que son génie".

The third attitude is represented by putting Alexander forward as an example, again with clear comparison to Napoleon's reputation among his critics, concerning his 1810 marriage to the Austrian archduchess, Marie-Louise (June 30th, 1816 [p. 895]): "Ce qu'on m'a reproché encore, c'est de m'être laissé enivrer par mon alliance avec la maison d'Autriche, de m'être cru bien plus véritablement souverain après mon mariage; en un mot, de m'être cru, dès cet instant, Alexandre devenu le fils d'un dieu!" The broad context of this remark

reverse movement in Caesar's case: from a debauched youth to the greatness of soul at the later stages of the career. For a general discussion of Napoleon's opinions on chance vs. willpower, see e.g. Jourdan, *Napoléon*, 126–127.

42 This petition, together with other letters by Las Cases, has been included in the editions of the *Mémorial* ever since its original publication in 1823.

ought not to be neglected: by many, especially in France, the “Austrian alliance” had been regarded as ill-omened from the onset, and by Napoleon’s enemies it had frequently been perceived as a literal hubris—a usurper snatching the bride from one of the oldest ruling houses in Europe. Napoleon himself viewed this union as a guarantee of peace, which had been propagated among others in the great commission from Antonio Canova, of the portrait of the new empress as the goddess Concordia. The “son of god” theme will be developed by both Chateaubriand and Bourienne.

Other noteworthy instances in which Alexander is evoked, are of less consequence for the image of Napoleon himself, and hardly add to the reception of the Macedonian. Again, if anything, they testify for the persistence of commonplaces connected with Alexander, as the brief remark in the discussion of the perspectives of Greek independence, during which the first Italian campaign and the later Illyrian provinces (1809–1813) are recalled, that looking over the Adriatic the young Bonaparte wrote to the Directors that “j’avais sous mes yeux le royaume d’Alexandre” (Mar. 10–12, 1816 [p. 456]). Another remark (Mar. 21–22, 1816 [p. 477]) is important as the testimony to the awareness of one of the main Alexander *topoi*: the Macedonian’s moderation, calmness and continence, i.e. the virtues opposite to the hubris, with which he had been also associated. In this case the discussion is about the justification of such associations and their validity: much as the praise of continence towards captives is commendable, the extolment of calm in face of a battle is exaggerated as a virtue of many officers and common soldiers.

Finally, it ought to be noted that, on St. Helena, Napoleon criticized Rollin in general (May 1st, 1816 [p. 607]: with an accusation of being “trop bon-homme” for a historian), and his account of Alexander’s campaigns in particular (Apr. 3rd, 1816 [p. 502]). In the latter instance, he even mused upon rewriting it: “Il lisait l’expédition d’Alexandre dans Rollin (...), il se plaignait d’un récit fait sans goût, sans intention, qui ne lassait, disait-il, aucune idée juste des grandes vues d’Alexandre; il lui prenait l’envie de refaire ce morceau.” This project, however, has never been accomplished, unlike the commentary to Caesar’s *Gallie War*.

Bourienne and Napoleon’s Alexander

Out of the closest circle of Napoleon’s companions who left memoirs of their relationships with Bonaparte, it is his secretary until 1802, Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourienne, who quite consistently not only employs the commonplace comparisons to Alexander in his narrative, but also gives testimonies to Napoleon’s attitude towards the Macedonian. His memoirs, published as late as 1829–1831, have always been treated as not necessarily the most reli-

able source,⁴³ but even if the anecdotes concerning Alexander are made up or enhanced, they do serve as a testimony for the reception of Alexander in the Napoleonic context.

The Alexander analogy begins with the motto, repeated in each of the ten volumes of the first edition, which contains some flattery for both parties: the author and his subject. The motto, according to the memoirs, is taken from a conversation that took place in Malmaison after the signing of the treaty of Amiens (1802): “Eh bien, Bourrienne, vous serez aussi immortel, vous?—Et pourquoi, général?—N’êtes-vous pas mon secrétaire?—Dites-moi le nom du secrétaire d’Alexandre; il se retourna vers moi, et me dit en souriant: *hem! pas mal!* ... il crut que je disais vrai.” To make things clear that this word-play was well and truly premeditated, Bourrienne adds the following footnote: “Bonaparte ignorait le nom du secrétaire d’Alexandre, et je ne pensai pas, dans le moment, à lui dire que ce secrétaire s’appelait Callisthènes: il a écrit des Mémoires sur Alexandre comme j’en écris aujourd’hui sur Napoléon; mais je ne crois pas plus, malgré cette ressemblance, à l’immortalité de mon nom que je ne la desire.”⁴⁴

The choice of this anecdote, otherwise quoted almost *en passant* among other reminiscences, shows clearly how prominent was the figure of Alexander as the model of greatness, and puts in context all other appearances of Alexander associations in the text. Passing over the minor mentions that mostly

43 They brought about ample anecdotic material unknown before, as well as novel interpretation of established facts, which provoked opposition mainly in Bonapartist circles.

44 *Mémoires de M. de Bourrienne, ministre d’état: sur Napoléon, le directoire, le consulat, l’empire et la restauration* (Paris: Ladvocat, 1829), vol. 5, 328–329. In the light of Bourrienne’s own account of Bonaparte’s knowledge of ancient history, it seems unlikely that he would not have heard the name of Callisthenes. But compare Metternich’s opinion (*Memoirs*, vol. 1, 275): “It frequently happened that he turned his conversation into historical discussions. These discussions generally revealed his imperfect knowledge of facts, but an extreme sagacity in appreciating causes and foreseeing consequences. (...) As he always made use of the same quotations, he must have drawn from a very few books, and those principally abridgments, the most salient points of ancient history and the history of France. (...) His heroes were Alexander, Caesar, and, above all, Charlemagne.” With both Bourrienne’s and Metternich’s opinions one must bear in mind the attitude and bias of the respective authors. Interestingly, however, the “who remembers” may have been a rhetorical topos; cf. Chateaubriand’s remark: “On est toujours étonné que les Napoléon aient des parents: qui sait le nom d’Aridée, frère d’Alexandre?” in *Mémoires d’outre tombe. Édition du centenaire, établie par Maurice Levaillant*, (Paris: Flammarion, 1982), vol. 3, 368.

attest to the popularity of the figure of speech, one should note several occurrences that give some idea about not only how Bourienne wishes to present Napoleon, but also to his view and knowledge of the Alexander history and legend.

Of major consequence for Napoleon's views about Alexander is the episode of 1800, *en route* to Dijon on the eve of the second Italian campaign, and the passage of the Great St. Bernard pass, immortalized by Jacques-Louis David in the painting that openly evokes Hannibal. Bourienne points at the discussion of the ancients as the *leitmotif* of the journey, and quotes the longest utterance on Alexander attributed to Napoleon, containing the most detailed commentary he ever made on Alexander's art of war. Even if written from memory long years after and edited to become suitably rhetorical, it probably renders the actual attitude:

Bonaparte parlait beaucoup dans ses voyages des guerriers de l'antiquité, surtout d'Alexandre, de César, de Scipion et d'Annibal. Il y avait dans ce qu'il disait une connaissance parfaite des localités et des moyens respectifs des parties belligérantes. (...) En allant de Paris à Dijon, pour gagner la Suisse, (...) Je lui demandai: «Quel est celui que vous préférez, d'Alexandre ou de César?—Je place Alexandre en première ligne. J'admire cependant la belle campagne de César en Afrique. Mais le motif de ma préférence pour le roi de Macédoine est dans la conception, et surtout dans l'exécution de sa campagne d'Asie. Il ne faut pas avoir la moindre idée de la guerre pour blâmer ce prince d'avoir passé sept mois au siège de Tyr. Moi, j'y serais resté sept ans s'il l'avait fallu. L'on fait de cela de grandes discussions dans les écoles; mais, moi, je regarde le siège de Tyr, la conquête de l'Égypte et le voyage à l'oasis d'Ammon, comme la preuve du génie de ce grand capitaine. Il voulait donner au roi de Perse, dont il n'avait pour ainsi dire battu qu'une faible avant-garde au Granique et à Issus, le temps de rassembler toutes ses forces pour pouvoir renverser d'un seul coup ce colosse qu'il n'avait fait qu'ébranler. Alexandre, en poursuivant Darius dans ses états, se serait éloigné aussitôt de ses renforts, n'aurait rencontré que des troupes éparses qui l'eussent attiré dans des déserts qui auraient enseveli son armée. En insistant sur la prise de Tyr, il assurait ses communications avec la Grèce, ce pays qu'il aimait tant, pour lequel il faisait tout, comme moi, pour la France, et dans la gloire duquel il mettait la sienne; et en s'emparant de la riche province d'Égypte, si puissante à cette époque, il forçait Darius à venir la défendre ou la délivrer, et à faire la moitié du chemin pour marcher à lui. Il frappa, utilement pour ses desseins, l'esprit toujours exalté des Orientaux, en se

faisant reconnaître pour fils de Jupiter. On sait combien cela l'a servi. Aussi, mort à trente-trois ans, quel nom il a laissé!»⁴⁵

Chateaubriand's Napoleon as Alexander

Napoleon is the main hero of two works by Chateaubriand: firstly a pamphlet published in 1814, commonly known under the title of its later publications: *De Buonaparte et des Bourbons*, and the third part of the writer's *magnum opus*, whose text had been revised ultimately in the 1830s, the *Mémoires d'outre tombe*. The former of the two texts is unequivocally critical towards the Emperor, while the latter shows increasing fascination,⁴⁶ as well as very thorough knowledge of the Napoleonic myth and legend.⁴⁷ Accordingly, the exploitation of the Alexander association differs in both of them. In the pamphlet, the fallen and exiled Napoleon is *not* an Alexander (even if he had been one at the peak of his glory): "c'est un Sylla, un Dioclétien, comme auparavant c'étoit un Alexandre et un Charlemagne", and further: "Buonaparte est un faux grand homme: la magnanimité qui fait les héros, lui manque. De là vient qu'on ne cite pas de lui un seul de ces mots qui annoncent Alexandre et César, Henri IV et Louis XIV".⁴⁸

In an entirely different mode Alexander serves as the main model for Napoleon in *Mémoires d'outre tombe*: the comparisons are more frequent and more elaborate even than those with Caesar; moreover what might be called with some exaggeration the "Alexander narrative", even though dispersed in several volumes, is consistent. Since both the time of the final revision of the published text—the 1830s—and the footnotes in the first edition show that Chateaubriand had read the *Mémorial*, some of the remarks can be treated as responses to the ideas included therein.

Almost all appearances of Alexander in the *Mémoires* are connected to Napoleon. Apart from superficial and commonplace comparisons based on military glory in the first place, the recurring motif is the process of heroizing and mythologizing of both personages, with the awareness of different circum-

45 *Mémoires de M. de Bourrienne*, vol. 4, 76–77.

46 See Christian Melchior-Bonnet, introduction to *Napoléon par Chateaubriand* (Paris: Egloff, 1949), x–xi; Maurice Descotes, *La légende de Napoléon et les écrivains français du XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Minard, 1969), 59–60.

47 The very useful distinction between lifetime myth and posthumous legend was coined by Sudhir Hazareesingh, *The Legend of Napoleon* (London: Granta Books, 2005), 4.

48 François-René de Chateaubriand, *De Buonaparte, des Bourbons, et de la nécessité de se rallier à nos princes légitimes, pour le bonheur de la France et celui de l'Europe* (Paris: Mame Frères, 1814 [3rd ed.]), xii and 48.

stances. Chateaubriand very skilfully constructs his account of Napoleon's life on the parallels with Alexander, or more specifically: with the legend of Alexander, concluding in the end that "Bonaparte n'est plus le vrai Bonaparte, c'est une figure légendaire composée des lubies du poète, des devis du soldat et des contes du peuple; c'est le Charlemagne et l'Alexandre des épopées du moyen âge que nous voyons aujourd'hui. Ce héros fantastique restera le personnage réel; les autres portraits disparaîtront."⁴⁹

These "parallel lives" of similarities and oppositions begin with the fantastic ancestry, imagined genealogies and explications of the family name, and the discussion is introduced as follows: "Comme il aurait été assez difficile de faire de Napoléon le fils de Jupiter Ammon par le serpent aimé d'Olympias, ou le petit-fils de Vénus par Anchise, de savants affranchis trouvèrent une autre merveille à leur usage: ils démontrèrent à l'Empereur qu'il descendait en ligne directe du Masque de fer."⁵⁰ Chateaubriand returns to this subject, again juxtaposing the two instances and their varied circumstances, in his account of the Egyptian campaign: "D'après les proclamations, les ordres du jour, les discours de Bonaparte, il est évident qu'il visait à se faire passer pour l'envoyé du ciel, à l'instar d'Alexandre. Callisthènes (...) fut chargé de prouver que le fils de Philippe était fils de Jupiter (...). Et pourtant, en s'occupant d'Alexandre, Bonaparte se méprenait et sur lui-même et sur l'époque du monde et sur la religion: aujourd'hui, on ne peut se faire passer pour un dieu."⁵¹

Putting aside the controversy concerning the extent to which Alexander had been indeed regarded as god in his own time and in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, Chateaubriand must have been aware of the same kind of adulation and association with divinities expressed in the first place in art, but also in literature belonging to the Napoleonic myth and legend, that the Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors would have received in their time. He may be right about the post-Enlightenment intellectual elite, but the popular reception made Napoleon into a saint, hero, and at least a semi-divine figure. Moreover, Chateaubriand's ideas of divinity in connection with Alexander's descent from Jupiter, have an analogy in the memoirs of Marshal Marmont, the Duke of Ragusa, which, however, were published after Chateaubriand's death, in the 1850s. Marmont, due to his complicated history of disloyalties to consecutive regimes, is not regarded as the most reliable of Napoleonic memoirists, but

49 Chateaubriand, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 652.

50 Chateaubriand, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 294.

51 Chateaubriand, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 342–343. This statement may be singlehandedly responsible for the aforementioned popular and academic belief in the omnipresence of Alexander motifs and mode in the writings from the time of the Egyptian campaign.

it is worth quoting the relevant passage, allegedly Napoleon's words after his coronation, related to his exceptional career, and directed to the minister of the marine, Decrès:

Oui, ma carrière est belle, j'en conviens, j'ai fait un beau chemin; mais quelle différence avec l'antiquité! Voyez Alexandre: après avoir conquis l'Asie et s'être annoncé aux peuples comme fils de Jupiter, à l'exception d'Aristote (...), tout l'Orient le crut. Eh bien, moi, si je me déclarais aujourd'hui fils du Père éternel et que j'annonçasse que je vais lui rendre grâce à ce titre, il n'y a pas de poissarde qui ne me sifflât sur mon passage: les peuples sont trop éclairés aujourd'hui, il n'y a plus rien de grand à faire.⁵²

Another passage in Chateaubriand, still devoted to Napoleon's origins, echoes Las Cases' remark from the letter to the English Parliament, on this occasion interpreting the lack of prominent ancestry and support from ages long family tradition as a sign of uniqueness:

Précisément parce que la divinité de la naissance manque à Bonaparte, cette naissance est merveilleuse. (...) Alexandre, né sur le trône, n'eut pas, comme Bonaparte, une petite vie à traverser afin d'arriver à une grande vie. Alexandre n'offre pas la disparate de deux carrières; son précepteur est Aristote; dompter Bucéphale est un des passe-temps de son enfance. Napoléon pour s'instruire n'a qu'un maître vulgaire; des coursiers ne sont pas à sa disposition; il est le moins riche de ses compagnons d'études. Ce sous-lieutenant d'artillerie, sans serviteurs, va tout à l'heure obliger l'Europe à le reconnaître; ce *petit caporal* mandera dans ses antichambres les plus grands souverains de l'Europe. (...) Napoléon, qui s'écriait avec tant de sens: « Oh! si j'étais mon petit-fils! » ne trouva point le pouvoir dans sa famille, il le créa.⁵³

This passage shows to the greatest extent the departure from the mode of *De Buonaparte*, where the same subject was approached entirely differently: "Sous la masque de César et de l'Alexandre on aperçoit l'homme de peu, et l'enfant de petite famille".⁵⁴

52 *Mémoires du Maréchal Marmont, Duc de Raguse de 1792 à 1841*, vol. 2 (Paris: Perrotin, 1857), 243.

53 Chateaubriand, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 295.

54 Chateaubriand, *De Buonaparte*, 50.

The “narrative” develops with the role of both Alexander and Napoleon in propagating their respective cultures throughout the world: “Alexandre fit connaître à l’univers le nom des Grecs (...); la langue et la civilisation de Hellènes s’entendirent du Nil à Babylone et de Babylone à l’Indus. (...) Bonaparte nous a fait connaître à tous les rivages; commandés par lui, les Français jetèrent l’Europe si bas à leurs pieds que la France prévaut encore par son nom, et que l’arc de l’Étoile peut s’élever sans paraître un puéril trophée”.⁵⁵ It ends with the parallel of death: “La solitude de l’exil et de la tombe de Napoléon a répandu sur une mémoire éclatante une autre sorte de prestige. Alexandre ne mourut point sous les yeux de la Grèce; il disparut dans les lointains superbes de Babylone. Bonaparte n’est point mort sous les yeux de la France; il est perdu dans les fastueux horizons des zones torrides”.⁵⁶ As if this were not enough, Chateaubriand supplies one more analogy, concerning the situation of Napoleon’s St. Helena grave, in the exile’s favourite spot on the island, at a fountain surrounded by weeping willows. He quotes, without providing the source, Napoleon’s words, on the occasion of the choice of this spot as the resting place, and in case of political reestablishment, a place for a monument, only to add in the next sentence that in Plutarch’s time a stone seat was being shown in a nymphaeum on the banks of the Strymon, where Alexander used to sit.⁵⁷

It has been pointed out that the main comparison that Chateaubriand makes in the *Mémoires d’outre tombe* is that between himself and Napoleon,⁵⁸ therefore the recurrent comparisons to Alexander can be viewed as the exaltation of the author himself. Whichever comparison was primary for Chateaubriand, it is clear that unlike many other writers, what he valued most in Alexander, was his superhuman quality disseminated by the legend, rather than the military persona or any actual deeds, and this is also what fascinates him most in Napoleon.

55 Chateaubriand, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 650.

56 Chateaubriand, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 669.

57 Chateaubriand, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 667–668.

58 Melchior-Bonnet, introduction, ix–x; Jean Boorsch, “Chateaubriand and Napoleon”, *Yale French Studies* 26 (1960): 55–56.

Images

Alexander is largely absent from the late French neo-classicist art of the age of the Revolution and the Empire,⁵⁹ which preferred other ancient models of both civic and military life, but his image was omnipresent in Napoleon's surroundings, due to earlier works of art filling the palaces. An epitomic act is the presentation of the sculpture found in Tivoli, known nowadays as the Azara Herm, to the First Consul, or possibly even the chief of the Army of Italy,⁶⁰ by the Spanish ambassador to the Papal States, and later to France, José Nicolás Azara. The bust would appear later in the engravings portraying Napoleon around 1813 in his study with his son, the little King of Rome—a clear anachronism, since the sculpture had been presented to the museum at the Louvre in 1803,

59 This was reflected in the scarcity of this period's works at the 1997/98 exhibition in Thessaloniki; see Nicos Hadjinicolaou's opening essay in the catalogue: "The disputes about Alexander and his glorification in the visual arts", in *Alexander the Great in European Art. 22 September 1997–11 January 1998*, ed. Nicos Hadjinicolaou (Thessaloniki: Institute for Mediterranean Studies, 1997): 20–21. Alexander became again more popular in art of later 19th century, but never to the extent of the 16th–17th centuries. Therefore, it seems that when François Benoit (*L'art français sous la Révolution et l'Empire: les doctrines, les idées, les genres*, Paris: Société française d'éditions d'art, 1897, 386) writes that "Il était cependant quelques sources où pouvait puiser l'artiste désireux de prendre exactement le pas de ses contemporains: telle l'histoire d'*Alexandre*, ancêtre logique de l'*Alexandre* corse, que choisirent plusieurs peintres", he falls into the trap of the commonplace. Neither he does present any examples of such paintings, nor do they exist, especially in large numbers. In official art Napoleon is presented as Jupiter (Appiani), Mars (Canova), Hercules (Prud'hon), and a generic ancient—Roman rather than Greek—leader or ruler, mostly in the earlier periods (e.g. allegories of the establishment of the Cisalpine Republic), but not as Alexander. The only two major paintings known to me at present, that date roughly from the period, are *Apelles painting Campaspe in the presence of Alexander* by Jacques-Louis David (achieved after 1819, a surviving sketch is dated to 1813; see Philippe Bordes, *Jacques-Louis David: Empire to Exile* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 229, Helen Weston, "David's *Alexander, Apelles and Campaspe*", in Mark Ledbury (ed.), *David after David: Essays on the Later Work* (Williamstown MA / New Haven / London: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute / Yale University Press, 2007), 138–151), and Nicolas-André Monsiau, *Alexandre le Grand attaquant la ville des Oxidraques* (1809; private collection), exploiting an episode most likely taken from Rollin. Out of the two only Monsiau's painting can be regarded as a glorification of Napoleon.

60 There is no certainty as to the date. Azara met Bonaparte during the first Italian campaign, and the bust could have been one of the gifts intended to alleviate the outcome of the treaty of Tolentino with the Papal States, but the presence of the sculpture in France, or in Bonaparte's collection is not attested until 1803, and its presentation to the Louvre.

but at the same time a testimony to the importance of this particular work of art, and to the analogy between the two rulers. More perplexing is the appearance of the inscription from the herm (ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΥ [sic!] ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΟ [sic!]) on the anonymous period painting showing Napoleon studying an ancient herm, entitled “L’Empereur au musée Napoléon”.⁶¹ It is hard to assess whether the painting was supposed to show Napoleon contemplating a portrait of Alexander, a statue of Athena/Minerva, or possibly the goddess Roma, as the iconography could suggest. It is hardly probable that the painter would mechanically insert the legend as it is, on a herm that does not resemble Alexander, but the artist’s intentions must remain a mystery, unless some unknown documentation pertaining to this particular work of art is discovered. One could venture a guess that the artist either intended to assimilate the two ancient characters: the great warrior and the goddess of just war and wisdom, and summarize several virtues of the modern hero in one sculpture. It is also possible that he represented Alexander only, in the vein of the bust statues, which can be confused with Athena, just as the Athena Mazarin had been interpreted as Alexander.

As has already been mentioned, Alexander was one of the major ancient figures whose portraits decorated the palace interiors and gardens, and until 1810 they were among those that were not only approved, but also encouraged by Napoleon. However, the marriage with Marie-Louise of Austria caused a large scale redecoration, and apart from all subjects alluding to the former Franco-Austrian conflicts, also most military subjects were purged from the palaces where the new empress was supposed to dwell: “seront aussi bannis des Tuileries les sujets « graves et noirs », tels que les batailles d’Alexandre”.⁶²

61 This is the title given by the only publication mentioning this painting (in private collection), the exhibition catalogue: *Dominique-Vivant Denon. L’œil de Napoléon*, ed. Marie-Anne Dupuy and Pierre Rosenberg (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1999), 147, cat. No. 134. Popular attributions to Andrea Appiani are not supported by any publication on the subject. A very interesting context to the composition of this painting is provided by the employment of Alexander’s bust in the painting by Henry Testelin, showing Louis XIV as protector of the Académie royale de peinture et sculpture (1668; Versailles). Burchard, *The Sovereign Painter*, 73 quotes a contemporary commentary by Georges Guillet de Saint-George on this portrait: “One can also see (...) a head representing Alexander, which seeks to emphasize the parallels between him, who was the greatest hero of Antiquity, and Louis XIV, who is the greatest hero of all times.” In Testelin’s painting the head lies at the feet of the king, while Napoleon in the painting in question contemplates it at the eye level, which might suggest equality of the heroes.

62 Jourdan, *Napoléon*, 306.

The only important Napoleonic commission that had Alexander in its focus, was the frieze designed and executed by Bertel Thorvaldsen for Napoleon's private salon in the Quirinale palace, which was being refurbished under the direction of the architect Raffaele Stern for the planned but never accomplished visit of the imperial family in Rome in 1812. Thorvaldsen chose the subject himself; the whole decoration, however, had been consulted not only with the imperial representatives, Dominique-Vivant Denon and the count Martial Daru, but also with Napoleon himself.⁶³

Despite the absence of the French Emperor, the work ought to be treated as the "visual expression *par excellence*" of the identification of Napoleon with Alexander, since "the triumphal entry which Napoleon was expected to make into Rome would find its historical counterpart in Alexander's entry into Babylon".⁶⁴ Moreover, the motif had its antecedent in a Napoleonic triumphal procession, based in the first place on Charles Le Brun's *Triumphal entry of Alexander to Babylon* (one of the projects of tapestries executed for Louis XIV): Pierre Paul Prud'hon's *La Paix* (1801), celebrating the treaty of Lunéville between the French Republic and Austria, later renamed *Triomphe de Bonaparte, premier consul, ou La Paix*. This composition, repeating after Le Brun the long established composition, known from both ancient and modern art, was reused on other occasions, e.g. to illustrate Napoleon's entry to Warsaw in 1807, but also in the symbolic rendition of the triumphal entry of the tsar Alexander I to Paris in 1814 by Boilly,⁶⁵ who employed the exact model of Prud'hon. During the 19th century the scene was apparently so strongly associated with Napoleon that it had been erroneously labelled in 1845, despite the distinctive facial features of the tsar.⁶⁶

Thorvaldsen's triumph is maintained entirely in the classical style, compositionally based on the Parthenon frieze, and preferred abstract association to

63 Bjarne Jørnæs, "Thorvaldsen's 'Triumph of Alexander' in the *Palazzo del Quirinale*", in *Thorvaldsen. L'ambiente, l'influsso, il mito*, eds. Patrick Kragelund and Mogens Nykjær (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1991): 36. For the analysis of the frieze see e.g. Jørgen Birkedal Hartmann, *Antike Motive bei Thorvaldsen. Studien zu Antikenrezeption des Klassizismus* (Tübingen: Verlag Ernts Wasmuth, 1979), 93–97. Copies of the frieze survive in the Villa Carlotta, Tremezzo, and Copenhagen (Ny Carlsberg).

64 Hadjinicolaou, "The disputes", 23.

65 Louis Léopold Boilly, *Le triomphe du Tsar Alexandre 1^{er} ou la Paix* (1814); Musée du Louvre, département des Peintures, inv. 20116. Prud'hon's original is kept at the Musée Condé in Chantilly.

66 Hélène Carrère d'Encausse and Richard Boidin, eds., *L'Art de la paix* (Paris: Petit Palais, exhibition catalogue, 2016), 175 [P. Lemasson].

representation in the ancient hero's costume. Prud'hon, however, employed mixed style for his triumph: even though all of the allegories surrounding the chariot are classical, Bonaparte is presented in modern uniform. Such practice was one of the characteristic traits of official portraiture of the period, especially in painting, while sculpture and medallion art preferred classical attire. Nonetheless, one of the medals that in its composition evokes a scene from Alexander's story, i.e. the piece related to the honours given to Napoleon by the mayors of Paris after the treaty of Pressburg (1805),⁶⁷ uses the modern costume. The scene in question is the family of Darius before Alexander and Hephæstion, with Napoleon and Joachim Murat respectively, which might be an allusion to the anecdotal material concerning the mistake made by Sisymbrius who had taken the more glamorous friend for the king (Fig. 22.2). Other possible medallion employments of Alexander's imagery are far more superficial and maintained in the classicist mode: the design of the medal commemorating the battle of Jena (1806) may have used as its model the Herculeum Alexander on horseback bronze, now in Naples, and the medal for the establishment of the Kingdom of Westphalia (1807) apparently alludes to the taming of Bucephalus.⁶⁸

A distant echo of the Alexander anecdotal material can be possibly found in "a curious piece, representing a portrait of Napoleon, and Diogenes putting out his lantern, with the motto: JE L'AI TROUVE",⁶⁹ since the composition of the

67 Designed by André Galle, executed by Nicolas Brenet; L[udvig] Bramsen, *Médailleur Napoléon le Grand ou description des médailles, clichés, repoussés et médailles-décorations relatives aux affaires de la France pendant le Consulat et l'Empire, vol. 1-3. Première partie 1799-1809* (Paris: Alphonse Picard & Fils / Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel Nordisk Forlag, 1904-1918), cat. No. *453. Dates given for the medals relate to events commemorated, not to the execution of designs, let alone pieces, which was always delayed by up to several years. There is no reliable academic publication that would present the chronology of production of Napoleonic medals, partly due to very incomplete documentation, to a large part destroyed after 1815; 19th century catalogues present the medals according to their topics, often erroneously indicating contemporary production because of the dates on the pieces, and later publications follow this confusing model.

68 Bramsen, *Médailleur*, cat. Nos. *537 and *660 resp. Unlike the best established Marcus Aurelius model, adapted for instance by Edmé Bouchardon for his equestrian statue of Louis XV (ca. 1762-1770), the horseman on the Jena medal is shown in a dynamic pose of a warrior in action. The bronze figure of Alexander had been known at least since the 1760s, as it is described in detail in J.J. Winckelmann's report on the antiquities of Herculeum of 1764. The taming of Bucephalus was a topic eagerly exploited in the French art of the period of Francis I.

69 Edward Edwards, *A Brief Descriptive Catalogue of the Medals Struck in France: and Its*



FIGURE 22.2 Medal "Panonia svbacta". Designed by André Galle, executed by Nicolas Brenet, related to the events of 1805. *Bramsen* *453

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image is reminiscent of the scenes of the meeting of Diogenes and Alexander, even if the inscription points at another Diogenes anecdote. The author of the catalogue dates it to 1807, as one of the pieces commemorating the victories of that year.⁷⁰

Dependencies, Between the Years 1789 and 1830, Contained in the Cabinet of the British Museum, with the Deficiencies Noted (London: J. and C. Adlard, 1837), No. 313; *Bramsen, Médailler*, cat. No. 679, under the same date.

- 70 The dating is derived from the inscriptions UL[M] AUS[TERLITZ] JEN[A] EYLA[U] FRIED-[LAND] on the barrel of the column behind Diogenes, with the latest listed battle of June 1807. Since this is not an official issue, the exact dating is virtually impossible, but paradoxically the same fact makes it probable, because to strike a jeton took less time than to design, commission and produce an official one.

As far as minor arts are concerned, Alexander, Caesar, Solon and Lykourgos, two models of military virtue but also statesmanship, and two model lawgivers, appear on an a piece of a *déjeneur* devoted to “great legislators of antiquity”, being an allegorical representation of Napoleon’s only legitimate son, then styled the King of Rome⁷¹ guided in his early steps by Minerva, by Jean François Philippine and Antoine Béranger.⁷²

The primary source for Alexander motifs in Napoleonic painting appears to be Charles Le Brun. Apart from Prud’hon’s triumph, his series of scenes from the life of Alexander served as model for one recurrent topic in painting—clemency. In European art and literature several ancient personages provided examples of continence and clemency: Scipio, Augustus, Alexander. Le Brun executed for Louis XIV two paintings related to this subject: *Alexander and the family of Darius*, and *Alexander with Porus*. Compositional elements of both of them were employed by Napoleonic artists, even though the analogy is less clear in these cases than in the case of the triumphal procession.

The arrangement of the family of Darius was used for the composition of several paintings and engravings, devoted to various acts of clemency, especially the pardon given to the prince of Hatzfeld, governor of Berlin in 1806, accused of espionage, upon the intervention of the prince’s wife.⁷³ The latter in most representations is shown as kneeling before Napoleon in a pose resembling that of Sisygambis in Le Brun’s painting, while the standing emperor extends his hand in a gesture repeating that of Alexander in the same painting.⁷⁴ In a

71 Napoléon François Charles Joseph, 1811–1832; the prince left France with his mother, the empress Marie-Louise Habsburg, in 1814, and was brought up at the court of his maternal grandfather in Vienna as the titular Duke of Reichstadt, kept away from European politics as well as his paternal family. He was proclaimed the ruler of the French under the name of Napoleon II by the 1815 abdication, but never ruled; his candidature was being brought up for several European thrones during the revolutions of 1830, with no avail.

72 Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, inv. N.M.K. CXV 543h; reproduced in Odile Nouvel-Kammerer, “The Symbolic World of Napoleon’s Empire”, in *Staging Power. Napoleon, Charles John, Alexander*, ed. George Vilinbachov and Magnus Olausson (Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, exhibition catalogue, 2010), 93 (as inv. 364).

73 Episode originally recorded in *Bulletin de la Grande Armée* (No. 22, 7 November 1806), cited later in various sources with modifications. See Bruno Foucart, *Les clémences de Napoléon et leurs images: art et politique*, in *Les clémences de Napoléon. L’image au service du mythe* (Paris: Bibliothèque Marmottan, exhibition catalogue, 2004), 26; Agnieszka Fulińska, “In pace Augusto. Augustan motifs in Napoleon’s public image”, in *Augustus Through the Ages: Receptions, Readings and Appropriations of the Historical Figure of the first Roman Emperor*, ed. Marco Cavalieri et al. (Bruxelles: Latomus, [forthcoming]).

74 The painting most indebted to the compositional model by Le Brun, and later repeated in

similar mode the gesture of Alexander in Le Brun's depiction of the scene with the king Porus appears to have been recalled in Antoine-Jean Gros' *Napoleon on the Battlefield of Eylau* (Salon of 1808).

The employment of the compositional models of Alexander paintings by the main court painter of Louis XIV in the paintings glorifying Napoleon's rule and military supremacy is not surprising, but it is clearly twofold. It is not only, and possibly not primarily, the ancient model that is being evoked, but its association with the glory of France under Louis XIV: if Louis had been the modern Alexander,⁷⁵ then Napoleon is symbolically both Alexander and Louis. However, allusions to Alexander were at times utilized for the purposes of caricature, especially in Britain. These instances are not numerous, and the only one that openly mentions Alexander ("Buonaparte the modern Alexander on his journey round the world", R. Newton, 1797; De Vinck 6917) is paradoxically the least interesting one.

From both iconographic and ideological point of view "The Gallic Idol" (J. Boyne, J. Barth, Aug. 20, 1803; BM Satires 10070) presents the most sophisticated image. The portrait bust is reminiscent of both Plutarch's (*De Alex. fort.* 2.2) description of the looks and portraits of Alexander, with its intense gaze of expressive eyes, and the modern imagery (longish hair, delicate features, like in Raphael's *School of Athens* but also in Le Brun's paintings). Both these traits and the words "invasion, rapine, lust, murder" around the head, point at Alexander rather than Roman emperors,⁷⁶ and some of the "Alexandran" elements—the

innumerable engravings and variants, was executed by Charles Boulanger de Boisfremont for the Salon of 1810; Amiens, Musée de Picardie, inv. 2684.

75 See Burchard, *The Sovereign Artist*, 43; Louis XIV had been compared to the same sequence of rulers as Napoleon: Alexander, Augustus and Charlemagne. For a detailed analysis of Augustan motifs in Napoleon's public image and propaganda see Fulińska, "In pace Augusto ...".

76 Described as such e.g. in Tim Clayton and Sheila O'Connell, *Bonaparte, Bonaparte and the British. Prints and Propaganda in the Age of Napoleon* (London: British Museum, exhibition catalogue, 2015), 127. The only British caricatures that alludes openly to Alexander is "Buonaparte the modern Alexander on his journey round the world" by R. Newton (1797), which is purely superficial in the treatment of the subject. "A Sacrifice to Ambition" (J.S. Barth, 1803) may be a reflection of the negative image of Alexander. For more detailed analyses see Agnieszka Fulińska, "Ancient topics in anti-Napoleonic caricature (1796–1821)", *Antiquity in Antiquity in Popular Literature and Culture*, ed. Konrad Dominas et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 130.

bulging eyes on the one hand, and insatiable ambition in world conquests on the other hand—would be further exploited to a great extent by generic anti-Napoleonic British caricature.



The fact that around 1789 Alexander ceases to be one of the major themes of European art and literature, as well as models for the rulers' iconography and propaganda, is perplexing. It does not, however, appear to have a deeper meaning and reason, apart from the prominence of Roman topics in the revolutionary period. No particular "black legend" associated with Alexander emerges in the period, and the prominent figures of rulers of the time seems to ask for associations with the Macedonian in the age of easily comprehended classical allusions.

Nevertheless, this apparent absence from mainstream art, literature and propaganda, does not mean that Alexander and Alexandrian motifs do not permeate people's perceptions, as on one hand is shown by promptly, even if mechanically and cursorily employed comparisons, and on the other on the stereotypical traits exploited by popular art. A very nice coda to the commonplace value of Alexander and his story in the Napoleonic period can be found in the anecdotal memoirs from the time of the Congress of Vienna, by the count Auguste de la Garde-Chambonas. In a jocular account of an altercation with a miller who would not lend him a saddle, he invokes all the world to witness his misfortune, and the tirade includes the following phrase: "vous, Messieurs Berthier et Lannes, qui, en Italie, en Egypte, vous êtes montrés les Parménions du nouvel Alexandre".⁷⁷

All this notwithstanding, one may risk the hypothesis that despite the still prevalent general disposition towards classical education, the emerging Romantic era to a lesser extent needed ancient heroes than its own ones. On the basic level, however, it could not do without calling them "new Alexanders" or other new ancient figures, even if these modern heroes would have preferred to be viewed just as themselves.

77 Comte A[uguste] de la Garde-Chambonas, *Souvenirs du Congrès de Vienne 1814–1815, publiés avec introduction et notes par le comte Fleury* (Paris: Librairie historique et militaire Henri Vivien, 1901), 224.

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The Men Who Would be Alexander: Alexander the Great and His Graeco-Bactrian Successors in the Raj

Rachel Mairs

In the *Geographical Journal* for 1901, Colonel Sir Thomas Hungerford Holdich, retired Superintendent of Frontier Surveys for the Government of India, reviewed a new collection of translations of Classical Greek and Roman texts by John Watson McCrindle. The review is very positive, but Holdich has one criticism of McCrindle's new book, which is that it is "heavier and not quite so handy as its predecessors in the series". Why should a British army officer in India care about the weight of a work of Classical scholarship? The answer lies in a British imperial obsession with the campaigns of Alexander the Great in India and Afghanistan. This obsession is manifest in the scholarly and semi-scholarly literature of British India, in works of fiction, and in the discourse of British imperialism. It goes beyond hero-worship of Alexander, to explicit identification with him. In Rudyard Kipling's *The Man Who Would be King* (1888), his antiheroes Dravot and Carnehan call on the narrator to use his books and maps to plan their expedition to Kafiristan. The narrator duly "hailed down volume INF-KAN of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*" from his bookshelf. Real life adventurers had more portable reference works at their disposal.

British Imperialism, Greek Imperialism

As long as the study of Indian antiquities confines itself to the illustration of Indian history it must be confessed that it possesses little attraction for the general student, who is apt to regard the labour expended on the disentanglement of perplexing and contradictory mazes of fiction as leading only to the substitution of vague and dry probabilities for poetical, albeit extravagant, fable. But the moment any name or event turns up in the course of such speculations offering a plausible point of connection between the legends of India and the rational histories of Greece or Rome,—a collision between the fortunes of an eastern and a western

hero,—forthwith a speedy and spreading interest is excited which cannot be satisfied until the subject is thoroughly sifted by the examination of all the ancient works, western and eastern, that can throw concurrent light on the matter as issue.¹

In speaking of the existence of Grecian colonies in the remote regions of Central Asia, said to be descended from ALEXANDER of Macedon, it is necessary to premise, that I am not indulging in speculation, but asserting a lineage of various tribes of people, that is claimed by themselves, and merits therefore our attention.²

Dravot and Carnehan, although fictional, have much in common with historical British Alexander-chasers in India and Afghanistan. First, they themselves identify with Alexander, and identify Alexander as a European conqueror of India, in the same vein as the contemporary British. This is in contrast to an India which is conceived of as ahistorical, whose only history worthy of the name comes in its occasional contacts with the West. In their encounter with the remote tribes of Kafiristan, Carnehan describes how “Dravot gives out that him and me were Gods and sons of Alexander”. This is supposed to have a positive effect because Dravot and Carnehan share a belief common among many real British adventurers that there were in the mountains of Kafiristan (modern Nuristan) actual descendants of the Greek soldiers of Alexander the Great. Paradoxically, supposedly barbarian tribes might therefore also be identified with Alexander. “I know you won’t cheat me”, Dravot says to the Kafirs, “because you’re white people—sons of Alexander—and not like common black Mohammedans”.

These two preoccupations—to be Alexander and to find Alexander—were common to many of the British travellers, soldiers and spies (who were often all three) who journeyed through the easternmost regions conquered by Alexander in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Not all such adventurers were themselves directly in British service. Mercenaries in the armies of rulers such as Ranjit Singh (1780–1839), Maharajah of the Sikh Empire, were among the first foreigners to penetrate into the north-western parts of the Indian sub-continent and Afghanistan, and play out their preoccupations with the region’s

1 James Prinsep, “Discovery of the name of Antiochus the Great, in Two of the Edicts of Asoka, King of India”, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 3 (1838): 156.

2 Alexander Burnes, “On the Reputed Descendants of Alexander the Great, in the Valley of the Oxus”, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 2 (1833): 305.

'Classical' past under Alexander in antiquarian and informal archaeological investigations.³ I shall discuss here two main periods—the 1830s–1840s, and the 1870s through to the First World War—in which British scholars and adventurers pursued such research most actively, by travelling in the regions concerned, collecting coins and artefacts and conducting excavations, first amateur, then, from the time of the establishment of the Archaeological Survey of India in 1861, increasingly scientific. One might also tell a similar story from the Russian side, from the period when Central Asia became the theatre of an ongoing 'Great Game' between the expansionist powers of the Russian and British Empires.⁴

The 1830s and 1840s: The *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*

Perhaps the most important organ for the collection, consolidation and diffusion of constructed 'knowledge' about India's 'Classical' past was the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*. From its first issue in 1832, the contents of the journal were eclectic, containing articles by Indian and European writers covering every field of scholarly or semi-scholarly enquiry imaginable. Investigations into Alexander the Great and his Greek successors in Bactria and India were very much the bread and butter of the *JASB* in its early years. Almost every issue from the 1830s contains one or more articles on the subject, with a much smaller number in the 1840s. The most visible traces of Alexander and the Greeks were Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek coins, which circulated in bazaars, especially in the north-west. The Greek numismatic 'gold rush' towards Central Asia is remarked upon by James Prinsep (1799–1840)—a scholar who, not coincidentally, worked at the government mint in Calcutta—in the journal's second volume:

Ancient Bactria, a country but recently opened to the investigation of the antiquarian. It is from this unexplored part of Asia that we may confidently expect a multitude of Grecian antiquities gradually to be

3 Elizabeth Errington, "Exploring Gandhara", in *From Persepolis to the Punjab: Exploring Ancient Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan*, ed. Elizabeth Errington and Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis (London: British Museum Press, 2007).

4 See the lively account in Hopkirk, Peter, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (London, Kodansha International, 1992).

developed. Travellers of all nations are already flocking thither to trace the steps and discover the monuments of Alexander's Indian conquests.⁵

In the same issue, the man who had collected many of the coins studied by Prinsep contributed a more romantic piece, "On the Reputed Descendants of Alexander the Great, in the Valley of the Oxus";⁶ followed by his account of the "'Topes' and Grecian Remains in the Panjáb". Alexander 'Bokhara' Burnes (1805–1841) first came to India as a soldier in the army of the East India Company. His Central Asian travels, in the furtherance of British imperial interests, made him an early celebrity travel writer, with his *Travels into Bokhara: Being an account of a Journey from India to Cabool, Tartary and Persia*, published to great acclaim in 1834, the year after his pieces for the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*. Burnes was later appointed British political agent in Kabul, and assassinated there in 1841.

The papers published in the 1833 volume of the *JASB* are fairly representative of both the favoured topics and the authorial credentials of subsequent articles on Alexander and Greek presence in the east and their writers. As well as officials in government or East India Company service who took up antiquarian research as a pastime, many of the authors were soldiers who had personal experience of travel in the regions of Alexander's campaigns, and developed strong opinions about his most probable routes. As in later periods—a topic to which I shall return below—these men travelled with Classical accounts in their baggage and produced lengthy and detailed descriptions of the territories through which they travelled, matching these as they saw fit to the topographical and anthropological data provided in Greek and Roman historians such as Arrian and Quintus Curtius Rufus. Court's "Conjectures on the March of Alexander",⁷ for example, supplies a level of topographical detail which was driven by a desire both to explore unknown territories, and to chart them, as well as to make them ready for conquest.

Amid its diverse geographical, astronomical and palaeontological studies (*inter alia*), antiquarian research of this sort rapidly became the *Journal's* staple material. Its editor viewed this shift in focus in a most positive light, and aimed

5 James Prinsep, "On the Greek Coins in the Cabinet of the Asiatic Society", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 2 (1833): 28.

6 Burnes, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 2 (1833): 305–308; on a similar topic, see Mohan Lal, "Further Information Regarding the Siah Posh Tribe, or Reputed Descendents of the Macedonians", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 3 (1834): 76–79, discussed below.

7 *JASB* 5 (1836): 387–395.

to ensure that the Alexander and Graeco-Bactrian studies published would be of the highest possible quality and take into account the latest antiquarian discoveries:

The tenor of the chief publications of the past year has been turned aside from the objects of natural science to which it was supposed future Indian researches would principally be confined, by a train of antiquarian discovery of an unexpected and highly interesting nature in the classical field of ancient Bactriana. Every endeavour has been made to bring to notice the novelties and facts, as they have been discovered; and this has in some cases caused confusion in the recital, imperfect investigation, and some contradiction in results too hastily announced. It is hoped, however, that these inconveniences, incident to a periodical appearing at short intervals, will be more than counterbalanced by the speedy and faithful publication of the circumstances as they have been brought to light ... Much however remains to be brought to notice regarding the Bactrian coins, and what has been learnt from the specimens furnished by Dr. GERARD, and by SHEKH KERAMAT ALI, has been purposely kept back to be incorporated with the facts developed by the collection of General VENTURA, now on its way to France under charge of the Chevalier ALLARD.⁸

Prinsep continued to contribute studies on Graeco-Bactrian coins to the journal over the following years.⁹ These studies, and his 1838 article, on the identification of the names of a Hellenistic king in the Asokan edicts, he viewed not merely as contributions to the growing field of Graeco-Bactrian studies, or historical curiosities, but as findings which might validate the whole mission of Indian historical research.

Prinsep may have held a still greater Classical prejudice than was usual for the period—or at least expressed it more stridently—but the identification and exploration of traces of Alexander held a lasting attraction for British scholars and travellers in India. The greatest contributor to this was undoubtedly Charles Masson (1800–1853), an East India Company Army deserter turned explorer, who travelled extensively in the North-West and Afghanistan and

⁸ *JASB* 3 (1834): vi.

⁹ *JASB* 5 (1836): 720–724: “New types of Bactrian and Indo-Scythic Coins”; *JASB* 7 (1838): 636–657: “Additions to Bactrian Numismatics and discovery of the Bactrian Alphabet”; *JASB* 7 (1838): 1047–1052: “Notes on Coins and Relics from Bactria”.

published accounts of his journeys, including a four-volume *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan and The Panjab*.¹⁰ In the first of several memoirs published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* "On the Ancient Coins Discovered at the Site Called Beghrám in the Kohistán of Kábul",¹¹ identified as Alexandria in the Caucasus, he outlines a broad and ambitious programme of historical research:

For the last six or seven years, I have directed my attention to the antiquities of Central Asia, particularly to the vestiges of its Grecian conquerors and rulers. In spite of conflicting circumstances, I have made many discoveries, which one day, by the favor of the Almighty, I shall make public. I shall not remit my labors: notwithstanding the inevitable casualties of time, notwithstanding the defect of historical records, notwithstanding the merciless and destructive ravages of Muhammeden conquerors, I think, I trust, we have sufficient evidences and indications still remaining, to enable us to decide with certainty, or to arrive at plausible conjectures on, most of the interesting points connected with these countries, from the period of the Macedonian conquests to the introduction of the Islam faith.¹²

Ambitious though this plan was, Masson succeeded in amassing a great body of archaeological and numismatic material in his travels. The fruits of his labours can be seen in the synthetic volume *Ariana Antiqua*,¹³ edited by H.H. Wilson (1786–1860), another one-time employee of the Calcutta mint, and at that time director of the Royal Asiatic Society in London. The volume presents the collected wisdom on Alexander's Greek descendants in Afghanistan, along with the accounts of Greek and Roman historians, and discussions of the works of modern historians including Bayer. Elsewhere, Masson also recounts the

10 Charles Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan, the Panjab, & Kalât, During a Residence in those Countries: To Which is Added an Account of the Insurrection at Kalat, and a Memoir on Eastern Balochistan* (London: Richard Bentley, 1844). On Masson's life and career, see Gordon Whitteridge, *Charles Masson of Afghanistan: Explorer, Archaeologist, Numismatist, and Intelligence Agent* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1986).

11 *JASB* 3 (1834); cf. *JASB* 5 (1836): 1–28, 537–554.

12 Charles Masson, "Memoir on the Ancient Coins found at Beghrám, in the Kohistán of Kábul", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 3 (1834): 161–162.

13 H.H. Wilson and Charles Masson, *Ariana Antiqua: A Descriptive Account of the Antiquities and Coins of Afghanistan with a Memoir on the Buildings called Topes by C. Masson* (London: East India Co., 1841).

story behind how these acquisitions were made: the difficulties of tracing the provenance of ancient coins in the bazaars of Afghanistan, and the problems which this poses for modern numismatists and historians:

The solitary coin found at *Jelalabad* does not afford proof positive that EUTHYDEMUS governed there also, both because there is no certainty where coins purchased in bazars were produced; and it is not impossible but that it may have found its way there from *Beghrām*, as the *Afghan* shepherds, resident on its plain during the summer, migrate to *Lughman* and the vicinity of *Jelalabad*, during the winter; and the few coins they may bring with them, they disperse among the dealers in the small towns, as their trifling wants of oil, tobacco, &c. may induce them.¹⁴

In Masson's writings, as in those of his fellows in the pages of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, detailed and scholarly discussion of the remains of Alexander and ancient Greek presence in the East is almost always juxtaposed with more impressionistic musings on the possibility of present-day descendants of Alexander still living in the mountains of Afghanistan, as well as reflection on the parallels between ancient Greek and modern British conquest and colonialism in the region. The inspiration for Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King*, with its lost tribe of descendants of Alexander in Kafirstan, lies in speculative accounts such as Masson's, where he muses on "Badakshan, where if we may not be so sanguine as to allow its princes even the honor of a bastard descent from ALEXANDER the GREAT, we may be gratified in beholding the posterity of OXARTES, his father-in-law, and of SISYMITHRES, his benefactor and friend, or of those who govern in their seats".¹⁵

Nor were the British the only ones to develop a fascination with purported 'lost tribes' of Greeks. In 1834, Munshi Mohan Lál published an account of some 'kafirs' in the hills, a group named the Siah Posh, which he had been given in Jalalabad, along with further tales which he recorded from the testimony of a Badakshani informant on his journey to Bokhara. Lál identified several supposed Macedonian traits in these people, indicating possible descent from Alexander the Great, including their method of warfare, long hair, goatskin clothing, consumption of wine and preference for sitting on chairs rather than upon the ground. Lál's informant stated, in addition, that many local Muslim

14 Charles Masson, "Second Memoir on the Ancient Coins found at Beghrām, in the Kohistán of Kábul", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 5 (1836): 11–12.

15 Charles Masson, "Memoir on the Ancient Coins found at Beghrām, in the Kohistán of Kábul", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 3 (1834): 161.

rulers and their soldiers had their own traditions of descent from Alexander and the Macedonians, which he relates to the stories of the Siah Posh which he had heard in Jalalabad. Lál provides the following explanation for his findings:

In my opinion, the *Siah Posh* soldiers, who claim also the same descent, were the countrymen of those of *Badakhshan*; but when the violent invasion of Muhammad subverted the rich valley of the Oxus, many of the Macedonian descendants were converted to *Islam*, and many, avoiding that religion, left the valley and chose their ground upon the mountains near the *Hindu Kush*. They live there now independently, keeping their former principles of worshipping the idols, (as the Macedonians did their heathen deities), and calling themselves the hero descendants of ALEXANDER's soldiers. They put on the black skin of the goat, and do not believe in Muhammed; therefore they are called *Kafir Siah Posh* (or black-dressed infidels).¹⁶

He concludes by expressing his disappointment at not having the opportunity to see these people and their customs for himself and awaits, presumably in knowledge of the British amateur researches taking place at the same time as his own, "more authentic information from an European traveller in that country".¹⁷

British officers and administrators who had not travelled in the North-West, and whose concern was not principally the identification of direct local descendants of Alexander and his army, also found resonances of Classical antiquity in India. Comparisons between the military exploits of Alexander and of the East India Company were typically positive, with both the Greeks and the British as bringers of order and civilisation. In a note on two coins with Greek inscriptions which he had purchased, a Major D.L. Stacy suggests that:

The Greek jaêdad or territories we may suppose grew into consideration much the same as did the Honorable Company's after their first footing: and like the infant Company too, we may suppose, the Greeks established a currency of their own, through more perhaps with a view of handing down their achievement to posterity than as a necessary medium of barter.¹⁸

16 Lál, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 3 (1834): 78.

17 Lál, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 3 (1834): 79.

18 *JASB* 3 (1834): 431–433.

For historical context, and for an insight into British imperialism beyond the 'civilizing mission', one might note that a subsequent issue contained a piece "On the preparation of Opium for the China market".¹⁹

From the early 1840s, the *Journal of the Asiatic Society* began to carry far fewer articles on Alexander in India or the Greek kingdoms of Bactria. There were still occasional notes on Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek coins, such as those by Christian Lassen (1800–1876) or a young Alexander Cunningham (1814–1893), later founder of the Archaeological Survey of India.²⁰ There were also some stylistic analyses of Greek influence in Indian sculpture, which range from plausible art historical arguments to plain wishful thinking.²¹ But after 1842 we find little or nothing.

The reason for this new silence is essentially political; although, the deaths of both Prinsep and Burnes in 1840–1841 may also have contributed. The First Anglo-Afghan War (1839–1842)—a British military disaster—and the Anglo-Sikh Wars of the 1840s made travel in the north-west difficult. In 1842, two British envoys, Charles Stoddart and James Connolly, were executed by the Emir of Bukhara on charges of spying. These factors seriously impeded British imperial ambitions in Afghanistan and Central Asia, and as a result curtailed the surveying and antiquarian activities which had accompanied them, at least partly as a front for spying. Later in the nineteenth century, in a period of harsher and more stringent British control in India, and especially in the aftermath of the suppression of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and the imposition of direct government by the British Crown, research and publication on the antiquities of India once again increased, although Afghanistan and Central Asia were still mostly off-limits.

The Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: Archaeological Explorations

Alexander Cunningham—who as a young man had published on Graeco-Bactrian coins in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*—became the first director of the Archaeological Survey of India in 1861. His reports on the survey's activities in 1862–1865 began with a mission statement not unlike that of some

19 *JASB* 5 (1836): 165–179.

20 See, for example, the articles in *JASB* 9 (1840), and *JASB* 11 (1842).

21 *JASB* 5 (1836): 567–570: L.R. Stacy, "Note on the Discovery of a Relic of Grecian Sculpture in Upper India"; *JASB* 16 (1847): 664–666: J. Abbott, "On a Sculpture from the Site of the Indo-Greek city of Bucephalia".

of his predecessors in British India, but with an attention to non-Classical sources lacking in the priorities, or indeed scholarly purviews, of writers such as Masson:

In describing the ancient state of the Panjab, the most interesting subject of enquiry is the identification of those famous peoples and cities, whose names have become familiar to the whole world through the expedition of Alexander the Great. To find the descendants of those peoples and the sites of those cities amongst the scattered inhabitants and raised mounds of the present day, I propose, like Pliny, to follow the track of Alexander himself. This plan has a double advantage for as the Chinese pilgrims, as well as the Macedonian invaders, entered India from the West, the routes of the conquerors and the pilgrims will mutually illustrate each other.²²

This is not the place for a full overview of the development and activities of the Archaeological Survey of India, which covered the entirety of the subcontinent, and periods long before and after Alexander and his successors.²³ British soldiers and administrators continued to travel in the north-west of the subcontinent, tried to trace the routes of Alexander and published their conclusions in various publications, scholarly and popular. Volume I of Cunningham's *Ancient Geography of India*²⁴ provided a valuable synthesis of the geographical information available on the periods of Alexander's campaigns, and of the Greek kingdoms of the region and their successors. But it was another writer whom I have already briefly discussed, John Watson McCrindle (1825–1913), who did most to contribute to popularizing and diffusing knowledge of what ancient Greek and Roman historians had to say about India and Afghanistan, and whose books had perhaps the greatest impact on late Victorian explorers with scholarly pretensions.

McCrindle graduated in Classics from Edinburgh University in 1854, and worked as a Classics teacher in Scotland before moving to Calcutta in 1859, where he served in senior positions in various schools and universities.²⁵ In the

22 Alexander Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India: Four Reports Made During the Years 1862–63–64–65. Volume II*. (Simla: Government Central Press, 1871): 1.

23 Sourindranath Roy, *The Story of Indian Archaeology, 1784–1947* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1961).

24 Alexander Cunningham, *The Ancient Geography of India. I The Buddhist Period, including the Campaigns of Alexander, and the Travels of Hwen-Thsang* (London: Trübner, 1871).

25 James Burgess, "Obituary Notices: John Watson McCrindle, LL.D", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1913).

1870s, McCrindle was approached by James Burgess, the editor of a new journal called the *Indian Antiquary*, to contribute translations of the Greek and Latin works which dealt with India. Over the following decades, in India and after his retirement and return to Britain, he published several volumes of Classical sources in translation, including those relating to the period of Alexander, and the few passages in Classical histories which mention Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek kings.²⁶

As well as reaching scholarly audiences through the *Indian Antiquary*, McCrindle's translations were also used by a wider constituency of British soldiers and bureaucrats in India, among whom it had become something of a popular hobby to set out to trace the route of Alexander, or identify customs or peoples from these ancient accounts in the present day.

The review of McCrindle's *Ancient India*²⁷ which was published by Holdich in the *Geographical Journal* clearly shows the practical uses to which these books were being put.²⁸ Holdich, indeed, had previously brought the same

26 J.W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenês and Arrian: Being a Translation of the Fragments of the Indika of Megasthenês Collected by Dr. Schwanbech, and of the First Part of the Indika of Arrian* (Calcutta, Thacker, Spink & Co., 1877); McCrindle, *The Commerce and Navigation of the Erythraean Sea: Being a Translation of the Periplus Maris Erythraei by an Anonymous Writer and Partly from Arrian's Account of the Voyage of Nearchos, from the Mouth of the Indus to the Head of the Persian Gulf* (Calcutta, Thacker. Sprink & Co., 1879); McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Ktesias the Knidian: Being a Translation of the Abridgement of his "Indika" by Photios, and of the Fragments of that Work Preserved in Other Writers* (London: Trübner, 1882); McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy: Being a Translation of the Chapters Which Describe India and Central and Eastern Asia in the Treatise on Geography Written by Klaudios Ptolemaios* (Calcutta, Thacker Spink & Co., 1885); McCrindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great as Described by Arrian, Q. Curtius, Diodoros, Plutarch and Justin* in Westminster, A. Constable and company, 1896; McCrindle, *The Christian Topography of Cosmas, An Egyptian Monk* (London, The Hakluyt Society, 1897); McCrindle, *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature: Being a Collection of Greek and Latin Texts Relating to India, Extracted from Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Pliny, Aelian, Philostratus, Dion Chrysostom, Porphyry, Stobaeus, the Itinerary of Alexander the Great, the Periêgêsis of Dionysius, the Dionysiaka of Nonnus, the Romance History of Alexander and Other Works* (Westminster, Archibald Constable and Co., 1901).

27 McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature: Being a Collection of Greek and Latin Texts Relating to India, Extracted from Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Pliny, Aelian, Philostratus, Dion Chrysostom, Porphyry, Stobaeus, the Itinerary of Alexander the Great, the Periêgêsis of Dionysius, the Dionysiaka of Nonnus, the Romance History of Alexander and Other Works* (Westminster, Archibald Constable and Co., 1901).

28 Thomas Hungerford Holdich, "Review: Dr. McCrindle's 'Ancient India'", *The Geographical Journal* 18 (1901).

journal with a report on "The Origin of the Kafir of the Hindu Kush",²⁹ the tribe supposed to be descendants of Alexander's army, whose customs had been reported by Lál and other authors in the 1830s. In this earlier article, Holdich had expressed his indebtedness to McCrindle's books, and noted that they "possess the invaluable attribute of portability". His review of *Ancient India* offers an invaluable insight into an army surveyor's practical needs and expectations of such a work:

The comparatively small world of Indian antiquarian scholars, no less than the larger world of intelligent travellers, owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. McCrindle for having placed within easy reach of them a compact and handy series of references to those classical authorities whose writings deal with Ancient India. ... The book is ... heavier and not quite so handy as its predecessors in the series, of which the adaptability of each separate volume to the capacity of an ordinary pocket, and its small consideration as an additional weight to a traveler's baggage, were by no means a contemptible attribute. The value of the series lies hardly more in the accuracy of translation and the scholarship exhibited by its author than in its ready accessibility to those political, military, and commercial wanderers whose business leads them into the remoter corners of our Indian Empire, and who can verify for themselves, as they go, the extraordinary accuracy of some, at least, of those old-world records of the changeless East. It is with the help of such practical scholars as McCrindle that the unwritten history of a country which has never produced a historian can be gradually unfolded by men whose knowledge of Greek literature probably ends with the Greek version of the New Testament; and the worst criticism which can be passed on this latest volume is that the author appears to be unconscious of the extent of the fresh information about ancient India which has been evolved with the assistance of those parts of the series which have preceded it.

[...]

McCrindle's series has probably done more to awaken a general interest in the antiquarian records of the most interesting part of Asia than any work which has hitherto appeared. It should not only have its place in every geographical library, but part of it, at any rate, should be a familiar addition to the personal equipment of the Indian frontier official; for it is on the frontier chiefly that the light of antiquity is required to assist

29 Holdich, "The Origin of the Kafir of the Hindu Kush", *The Geographical Journal* 7 (1896).

in unraveling the ethnographical problems of the present. An entire revision of our map knowledge of ancient India is one of the requirements of the age, and to this, again, the study of McCrindle's translations is almost a necessary introduction.³⁰

Holdich's criticisms, naturally enough, centre on McCrindle's limited acquaintance with the most recent surveys of the Indo-Afghan borderlands, his own area of expertise. But the interest of a volume of translated Classical sources on ancient India for a British administrator lay not just in satisfying his intellectual curiosity, or passing his spare time in exploration along the routes of Alexander, but in confirming his impressions and judgments about modern Indian and Central Asian populations. Holdich paints a picture of an unchanging, ahistorical India, in which the tribes identified by Herodotos may be matched directly onto those of the present day: "Indeed, it may fairly well be doubted whether any modern British official possesses a clearer idea of the ethnographical and geographical affinities of the nations and tribes inhabiting Asia between Syria and Indo-China at the present time, than that which was possessed by Herodotus four centuries and a half before Christ." The Classical historians were thus incorporated into a contemporary Orientalist discourse about knowing and controlling the East. For some Britons in India, the appeal lay not just in trying to identify the physical geography of the ancient Greek and Roman historians, but also the human geography, claiming that peoples and their languages and customs were unchanged from the time of Alexander.

Tensions in the borderlands between British India and the Emirate of Afghanistan remained high. There were two further Anglo-Afghan Wars, in 1878–1880 and 1919. In 1893, the Durand Line was established to delineate the Afghan and British spheres of influence. Afghanistan remained largely closed to the outside world until the Third Anglo-Afghan War of 1919, when the Emir Amanullah asserted the country's right to establish diplomatic relations with other countries independently of British control, and invited the French to establish an archaeological delegation. It would be appropriate, however, to append a brief coda to my discussion of British research on the Alexander the Great in the East by considering the work of Sir Marc Aurel Stein (1862–1943), a British-Hungarian archaeologist best known for his explorations of Chinese Turkestan in the early years of the twentieth century.³¹

30 Holdich, "Review: Dr. McCrindle's 'Ancient India'", *The Geographical Journal* 18 (1901).

31 Annabel Walker, *Aurel Stein: Pioneer of the Silk Road* (London, J. Murray, 1995); Helen Wang, *Sir Aurel Stein in The Times: A Collection of Over 100 References to Sir Aurel Stein and*

Stein had long been interested in Bactria and its archaeology, but political circumstances had prevented him from visiting Afghanistan. In the 1920s, he undertook an expedition “On Alexander’s Track to the Indus”,³² a more than usually scholarly contribution to the by now extensive literature of travelogues tracing the route of Alexander the Great through the north-west of the Indian subcontinent. In the early 1940s, when he was already eighty years old, he was finally able to visit Afghanistan, but died en route to Bactria, in Kabul—where he is buried in the British Cemetery alongside the Anglo-Afghan war dead of the nineteenth century, and casualties of the 1960s and 70s ‘hippie trail’.

Postcolonial Alexanders

British adventurers and administrators explored the north-west frontier with the Classical histories of Alexander the Great’s Indian campaigns in their saddlebags, in much the same way in which Alexander himself is said to have slept with the account of a still more ancient clash between East and West—Homer’s *Iliad*—under his pillow (Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 8.2). In recent decades, war in Afghanistan has led to a new wave of comparative exercises between ancient and modern imperialism in the region.

Although judgements of the nature of European colonialism in South and Central Asia have changed, comparisons continue to be made between Alexander’s Graeco-Macedonian successors in the region and those, in the words of Lord Curzon in a speech to the Annual Meeting of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1900, “borne to India upon a crest of a later but similar wave”.³³ I have reviewed some of these comparisons in twentieth and twenty-first century scholarship elsewhere,³⁴ and will give only a few select examples here.

Raj nostalgia persists in some modern studies, somewhat incongruously, alongside harsher judgements of colonialism. In the Western popular imagination, there is still room for romanticisation of the Raj in the very same breath as condemnation of its values. This popular image of British India is dangerously

his Extraordinary Expeditions to Chinese Central Asia, India, Iran, Iraq and Jordan in The Times Newspaper 1901–1943 (London, Eastern Art Pub., 2002).

32 Sir Marc Aurel Stein, *On Alexander’s Track to the Indus* (London, Macmillan, 1929).

33 Quoted by Himanshu Prabha Ray, “Alexander’s Campaign (327–326 BC): A Chronological Marker in the Archaeology of India”, in *Memory as History: The Legacy of Alexander in Asia*, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray and Daniel T. Potts (New Delhi, Aryan Books International, 2007), 107.

34 Rachel Mairs, “‘Hellenistic India’”, *New Voices in Classical Reception* 1 (2006).

evocative, and its familiarity—from sources which include popular novels and television series—means that it is all too easy to invoke it without further consideration. Peter Green, for example, imagines local peoples in the territories conquered by Alexander Hellenising and vying to join the gymnasium: “like Indians under the British Raj angling for the *entrée* to European club membership”.³⁵ The Indo-Greek kings, on the other hand, are compared to Englishmen who: “went native”, and he notes that in coin portraits: “many of these monarchs sport the solar topee (or a topee like helmet) latterly associated with the British Raj: colonialism breeds its own symbols of continuity”.³⁶

Colonialism, it goes without saying, could not casually breed its own symbols of continuity independent of actual historical or structural connections between the periods in question. A key text in postcolonial approaches to the Hellenistic successor kingdoms to Alexander is Édouard Will’s “Pour une ‘anthropologie coloniale’ du monde hellénistique”. While recognizing the fundamental differences between the Hellenistic world and modern capitalist, industrialized, imperial expansion,³⁷ Will seeks out points of comparison between the two periods of colonization and uses these to orient his research on the Hellenistic world.³⁸ Further points can and have been raised against the structural equivalence of the two colonial context, or sets of contexts, discussed by Will. Laurianne Martinez-Sève, for example, in direct response to his views, notes that the Greek settlers of Bactria and India, after the time of Alexander, lived in the conquered lands without direct and frequent contact with an external imperial ‘metropolis’.³⁹ Even the bipolar opposition between colonisers and colonised can be broken down. Alexander and his armies came from diverse points of origin within the Hellenised world, and the peoples whom they encountered in Bactria and India were similarly diverse. Inter-marriage with non-Greek women, whether locals or captives from other regions through which Alexander campaigned,⁴⁰ meant that from the first locally-born

35 Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium: The Hellenistic Age* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990), 316.

36 Green, *Alexander to Actium*: 320 and 350.

37 Édouard Will, in *The Craft of the Ancient Historian: Essays in honor of Chester G. Starr* eds. Eadie and Ober (Lanham, University Press of America, 1985), 288–289.

38 Will, in *The Craft of the Ancient Historian: Essays in honor of Chester G. Starr* eds. Eadie and Ober (Lanham, University Press of America, 1985), 282.

39 Laurianne Martinez-Sève, “Les Grecs en Orient: portraits croisés”, in *Portraits de migrants, Portraits de colons*. 1 ed. Pierre Rouillard (Paris, de Boccard, 2009), 133–134.

40 Stanley M. Burstein, “Whence the Women?: The Origin of the Bactrian Greeks”, *Ancient West & East* 11 (2012).

'Greek' generation of the colonial settlement, the supposed 'European' dominant imperial caste had close connections to local peoples, cultures and languages.

Another problem in applying comparisons from British imperialism in India to ancient contexts is that it can lead to leaps of logic which are not warranted by the actual source material. The Greek inscription of a man named Sophytos son of Naratos (traced by Pinault to the forms Subhuti son of Narada⁴¹) from Old Kandahar, for example, has tended to be read in ways which view Sophytos as an Indian acculturated to Greek ways, living in a Greek-dominated community.⁴² His protestation of his Greek education, and the high literary quality and aspirations of his inscription, have been viewed as a contrast to his supposed Indian identity. Yet Sophytos at no point in his inscription claims an ethnic identity of any sort, and we know too little about his contemporary *milieu* to compare his behaviour and cultural points of reference to those of his neighbours, 'Indian' or 'Greek', in the period after Alexander.⁴³

The history of comparisons between the Alexander and the British in India is nevertheless an interesting one, from an historiographical point of view: contemporary circumstances, whether imperial confidence or postcolonial anxiety, affect writers' perceptions of Hellenistic Greek colonialism, and colour their moral and emotional responses to it. Such comparisons are, in my view, best kept at this level, rather than that of asserting any direct historical connection or deep and compelling similarity.

I would like to conclude by returning to the legends of descendants of Alexander in the hills of the north-west frontier, which have acquired a new resonance and popularity in an age when outside intervention in Afghanistan has awakened interest in earlier western imperial ventures in the region.⁴⁴ As

41 Georges-Jean Pinault, "Remarques sur les noms propres d'origine indienne dans la stèle de Sôphytos", in *Afghanistan: Ancien carrefour entre l'est et l'ouest*, ed. Osmund Bopearachchi and Marie-Françoise Boussac (Turnhout, Brepols, 2005).

42 Paul Bernard, Georges-Jean Pinault and Georges Rougemont, "Deux nouvelles inscriptions grecques de l'Asie Centrale", *Journal des Savants* (2004).

43 Rachel Mairs, "Sophia Grammata: Greek Acrostichs in Inscriptions from Arachosia, Nubia and Libya", in *The Muse at Play: Riddles and Wordplay in Greek and Latin Poetry*, ed. Jan Kwapisz, David Petrain and Mikołaj Szymański (Berlin, De Gruyter, 2012), 279–306; Mairs "The Places in Between: Model and Metaphor in the Archaeology of Hellenistic Arachosia", in *From Pella to Gandhara: Hybridisation and Identity in the Art and Architecture of the Hellenistic East*, ed. Anna Kouremenos, Sujatha Chandrasekaran and Roberto Rossi (Oxford, BAR, 2011), 177–189; Paul Bernard, "Hellenistic Arachosia: A Greek Melting Pot in Action", *East and West* 55 (2005), 13–34.

44 Corinne Fowler, *Chasing Tales: Travel Writing, Journalism and the History of British Ideas*

in the early nineteenth century, such a descent has been both ascribed and actively claimed. Controversially, Kalash communities in the mountains near Chitral have received investment and support from Greek NGOs, aid which comes with an understanding that ancient connections with Greece and Greek culture are both authentic and to be promoted. In a 2011 article in the British newspaper *The Observer*, a reporter described:

[...] a museum, small hospital, library, hostel and school complex for the Kalash (which Muslims cannot attend), housed within an absurdly Greek-looking palace built by the NGO Greek Volunteers, with help from Greece's government body Hellenic Aid. Greek Volunteers's director, Athanasios Lerounis, a long-time champion of the Kalash and the man who raised the money to build the centre, assures me that though there are "similarities to the Ionic style", the building came from "the local architecture". The attempted olive growing that goes on is, however, more likely to be an ancient tradition of Athens.⁴⁵

Such claims over the Kalash and their identity persist in the face of scientific evidence to the contrary. Economic imperatives, and the international profile which comes with recognition of the uniqueness—and picturesqueness—of their culture, give the Kalash their own reasons for promoting the connection to Alexander and to Greece, and they reveal themselves to be not without appreciation of the ironies of the situation:

Almost all accounts of the Kalash fixate on the tribe's mythological descent from Alexander the Great. The romance of Alexander's tribe is a key part of Kalash tourism, although "they did a DNA test and they found no connection" is a familiar refrain here.⁴⁶

The reality of a connection to Alexander is immaterial, if both locals and foreigners want to believe it.

about Afghanistan (Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2007), 44–48; Frank L. Holt, *Into the Land of Bones: Alexander the Great in Afghanistan* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005), 151–152; Timothy Howe, "Alexander and 'Afghan Insurgency': A Reassessment", in *Brill's Companion to Insurgency and Terrorism in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Timothy Howe and Lee L. Brice (Leiden, Brill, 2016), 151–182.

45 Oscar Rickett, "Culture Kalash in Pakistan", *The Guardian*, 16 April 2011.

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Receptions of Alexander in Johann Gustav Droysen*

Josef Wiesehöfer

It has often been said, with justice, that this (Droysen's *Alexander*, J.W.) is the first book of modern historical scholarship on Alexander.¹

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Moreover, he (A. Momigliano, J.W.) remarked forcefully that i(t) would be useful to undertake research on the 'pre-Droysenian' Alexander. Such an exercise could serve to enlighten historians who are too often tempted to see in the Prussian historian a kind of *prōtos heuretēs* in the area of research on Alexander and the Hellenistic period.²

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Biographical Portrait of Johann Gustav Droysen³

Johann Gustav Droysen, born on 6 July 1808 in the small town of Treptow on the Rega, was the son of the Prussian garrison minister Johann Christoph Droysen. After attending the Marienstiftsgymnasium in Stettin, he studied in Berlin;

* I thank my dear friend Reinhold Bichler (Innsbruck) for valuable comments and hints.

1 Peter Green, *Alexander of Macedon 356–323 BC: A Historical Biography*, rev. ed. ²1974, repr. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 482.

2 Pierre Briant, "Alexander the Great", in *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenic Studies*, ed. George Boys-Stones et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 79.

3 The most important biographical study was presented by Wilfried Nippel: *Johann Gustav Droysen. Ein Leben zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik* (München: C.H. Beck, 2008). Cf. also: Christiane Hackel, ed., *Johann Gustav Droysen, 1808–1884. Philologe, Historiker, Politiker* (Berlin: G+H Verlag, 2008) as well as several contributions in Stefan Rebenich and Hans-Ulrich Wiemer, ed., *Johann Gustav Droysen. Philosophie und Politik—Historie und Philologie* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2012).

his main focus was on Classical Philology. He also attended philosophical lectures (among others by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel), as well as those in the fields of geography, history, law and theology. In 1831, he earned his doctorate with August Boeckh as his supervisor, and he taught from 1833 as a *Privatdozent* and unsalaried Extraordinary Professor of Ancient History at the University of Berlin, besides his work as a high school teacher at the famous *Berlinisches Gymnasium zum Grauen Kloster* (since 1829). Droysen's friendly relations with members of the family of Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, not least the famous composer Felix, also fall into the Berlin era. During these years, Droysen published, apart from his famous book on Alexander (see below), a translation of the works of Aeschylus in 1832⁴ and a paraphrase of Aristophanes' comedies (1835–1838).⁵

In the spring of 1840 Droysen was appointed Professor of History at the University of Kiel, where he succeeded as an academic teacher and increasingly turned to Contemporary History as his subject of study. At the end of March, 1848, he was sent to the German Bundestag by the Provisional Government of Schleswig-Holstein as a member of the so-called Committee of the Seventeen; he then became a representative of the fifth Holstein electoral district in the National Assembly (among other things as secretary in the Constitutional Committee) where he fought for the Lesser German solution under Prussian leadership. In 1850, Droysen published, together with Karl Samwer, a history of Denmark's dealings with the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein.⁶

In the winter term of 1851/52, Droysen followed a call to the University of Jena, where he worked mainly on Prussian history and also gave a lecture on the theory of history for the first time. Called to Berlin University in 1859/60 against the will of its faculty, Droysen, who had always considered it Prussia's mission to unify Germany, was appointed "Historiographer of the Brandenburg State" in 1877. His main works on Prussian history and historiographical methodology during his Jena and Berlin years were: "Das Leben des Feldmarschalls Grafen

4 Johann Gustav Droysen, *Des Aischylos Werke. Uebersetzt von Joh. Gust. Droysen*, 2 Bde. (Berlin: G. Finke, 1832).

5 Johann Gustav Droysen, *Des Aristophanes Werke. Uebersetzt von Joh. Gust. Droysen*, 3 Bde. (Berlin: Veit & Comp., 1835–1838).

6 Johann Gustav Droysen and Karl Samwer, *Die Herzogthümer Schleswig-Holstein und das Königreich Dänemark. Aktenmäßige Geschichte der dänischen Politik seit dem Jahre 1806* (Hamburg: Perthes-Besser und Mauke, 1850) (English translation: *The Policy of Denmark towards the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein, from the Year 1806 to the Breaking Out of the War in March, 1848* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1850)).

York von Wartenburg" (The Life of Count York von Wartenburg),⁷ "Geschichte der preußischen Politik" (The History of Prussian Politics)⁸ und "Grundriss der Historik" (Outline of the Principles of History).⁹ In the 1870s, he resumed his work on the history of Hellenism (see below). On June 19, 1884, Droysen died shortly before his 76th birthday.

Droysen and Hellenism¹⁰

Firstly, Droysen used the term Hellenism to characterize a specific epoch, established by Alexander III of Macedon. Secondly, he established the *Geschichtswürdigkeit*¹¹ (historical relevance) of this post-Classical period in Germany. This period was, in his opinion, characterized by a world of states formed

7 Johann Gustav Droysen, *Das Leben des Feldmarschalls Grafen York von Wartenburg*, 3 Bde. (Berlin: Veit & Comp., 1851–1852).

8 Johann Gustav Droysen, *Geschichte der preußischen Politik*, 14 Bde. (Leipzig: Veit & Comp., 1855–1886).

9 Johann Gustav Droysen, *Grundriss der Historik* (Leipzig: Veit & Comp., 1868); *Historik. Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Peter Leyh and Horst Walter Blanke (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1977 ff.); English translation: *Outline of the Principles of History*. Translated by E. Benjamin Andrews (Boston: Ginn & Comp., 1893).—A complete list of publications, autographs and pictures of Droysen's as well as a selection of biographical literature on him can be found in: Horst W. Blanke, ed., *Droysen-Bibliographie* (Historik. Historisch-kritische Ausgabe. Supplement) (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2008).

10 Authoritative: Reinhold Bichler, "Hellenismus". *Geschichte und Problematik eines Epochenbegriffes* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983); ib., "Johann Gustav Droysen und der Epochenbegriff des Hellenismus," in ib., *Historiographie—Ethnographie—Utopie. Gesammelte Schriften*, part 3, ed. Robert Rollinger and Brigitte Truschneegg (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 195–205. Originally published in *Groniek. Historisch Tijdschrift* 177 (2008): 9–22; ib., "Droysens Hellenismus-Konzept. Seine Problematik und seine faszinierende Wirkung," in *Johann Gustav Droysen. Philosophie und Politik—Historie und Philologie*, ed. Stefan Rebenich and Hans-Ulrich Wiemer (Frankfurt: Campus, 2012), 189–238. Cf. also Benedetto Bravo, *Philologie, histoire, philosophie de l'histoire. Étude sur J.G. Droysen, historien de l'Antiquité* (Wrocław et al.: Polish Academy of Sciences, 1968); Wilfried Nippel, "'Hellenismus'. Von Droysen bis Harnack oder: Interdisziplinäre Missverständnisse," in *Adolf von Harnack. Christentum, Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft*, ed. Kurt Nowak et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 15–28; Pascal Payen, "Johann Gustav Droysen et l'Histoire de l'Hellénisme. L'époque hellénistique entre Alexandre et la Prusse," in Johann Gustav Droysen, *Histoire de l'Hellénisme*, édition intégrale, t. 1 (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 2005), 5–82.

11 Wilfried Nippel, "Droysen, Johann Gustav," in *Geschichte der Altertumswissenschaft*

and administered according to rational criteria and, as it was marked by mercantile success and the achievements of civilization, could be called “the modern age of antiquity”.¹² And thirdly, he intended to portray the fusion of Greek, Oriental, and Jewish culture(s) (with the “Hellenic spirit” being the decisive part) as an essential condition for the rise of Christianity (and Islam). But he himself did not meet this claim, raised in prefaces and concluding remarks of his “Geschichte des Hellenismus” (vols. 1–2, Hamburg: Perthes 1836–1843, almost identical (see below) in the new edition: “Geschichte des Hellenismus”, 3 parts, Gotha: Perthes, 1877–1878), since his historical narrative of the history of the Hellenistic world stops in the year 220 BC. It is only with broad brush strokes that later historical developments are drawn: for instance the way that the West, with the “agrarian” Rome and the “mercantile” Carthage and their respective national base, overcame the East. There, neither Macedonia nor Greece had succeeded in merging into a strong national state, and it had not been possible to establish a permanent system of supra-regional monarchies with modern, efficient bureaucracies. And with regard to world history, even the time when Rome had become lord of the Eastern Mediterranean and of the areas as far as the Euphrates, the Parthians masters of the territories from the Indus to Armenia, turned out to be as a time of transition. Ultimately, this development became decisive: the formation of a Christian Europe and a Muslim Orient. In Droysen’s view, it remained relevant up to the present day.

With his teleological view of history Droysen proved to be an intelligent student of his teacher Hegel.¹³ In contrast to the latter, however, who believed that the essence of the course of history could be grasped by means of philosophical intuition, the student thought that “the historian should be committed to approaching the work of God in history only apprehensively and by means of strict research.”¹⁴ Also in contrast to Hegel, for whom the Greeks and Orientals “had already contributed to the self-knowledge of the World Spirit, before Alexander ferried to Asia”, Droysen had Alexander start a new era:

ten. *Biographisches Lexikon* (Der Neue Pauly, Suppl. 6), ed. Peter Kuhlmann and Helmuth Schneider (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2012), 331.

12 Johann Gustav Droysen, *Geschichte des Hellenismus II: Geschichte der Bildung des hellenistischen Staatensystems* (Hamburg: Perthes, 1843), 313 (“die moderne Zeit des Altertums”).

13 Bravo, *Philologie*; Payen, *Droysen*.

14 Bichler, *Droysen*, 17 (“sich dem Wirken Gottes in der Geschichte nur mit den Mitteln strenger Forschung ahnungsvoll zu nähern”).

According to Droysen, Alexander was able to lay the foundations for a new unitary world during his lifetime. This was the thesis. This fusion of Orient and Occident, however, had the effect that the Greek Enlightenment destroyed the moral foundation of the Oriental cultures, leading to a fusion of the gods and to the search for a universal religion. That was the antithesis. Finally, to Droysen—again in contrast to Hegel—this synthesis was not the result of a self-motion of the Spirit; it came into the world in the shape of Jesus Christ through divine revelation.¹⁵

In spite of all the linguistic reductions and smoothing, Droysen retained this basic conception in the second edition of his “Geschichte des Hellenismus” of 1877/78.

As far as the historical role of ‘the Orient’ is concerned,¹⁶ Droysen did not follow the general civilizational devaluation of the East, which can be observed with Friedrich August Wolf and others, and finally—in the two volumes on the “History of Hellenism” of 1836 and 1843—he even recognized the diversity of the Orient with its numerous *Volksthümlichkeiten*. Additionally, his concept of Hellenism did not simply proceed from the notion of the Ancient Near East being the childhood stage of Western civilisation, but it also ascribed to its peoples “various abilities” (*vielerlei Geschicklichkeiten*) and admitted their part in the process of fusion, even if Hellenism is above all a performance of the “Greek” or the “Western Mind” (*des Griechenthums* or *des abendländischen Geistes*). Not even the conceptual interruption of the connection between Ancient Near Eastern and Islamic history, which is still common today, can be found in Droysen. On the contrary, in his opinion, both Christianity and Islam in Western Asia were developing on the foundation of Hellenism. Likewise,

15 Wiemer, *Quellenkritik*, 116f.: “... dass Orientalen und Griechen ihren Beitrag zur Selbst-erkenntnis des Weltgeistes bereits geleistet hatten, bevor Alexander nach Asien übersetzte ... Droysen zufolge war es Alexander noch zu seinen Lebzeiten gelungen, die Grundlagen für eine neue Welteinheit zu legen. Das war die These. Diese Verschmelzung von Orient und Okzident aber hatte zur Folge, dass die griechische Aufklärung die sittliche Grundlage der orientalischen Kulturen zersetzte, indem sie zu einer Vermischung der Götter und dem Suchen nach einer universalen Religion führte. Das war die Antithese. Die Synthese schließlich war für Droysen—wiederum im Gegensatz zu Hegel—nun aber gerade kein Ergebnis der Selbstbewegung des Geistes; sie trat in der Gestalt Jesu Christi durch göttliche Offenbarung in die Welt.”

16 For the following paragraph, see Josef Wiesehöfer, “‘Geschichtslose Völker’: Johann Gustav Droysen und der Orient”, in *Johann Gustav Droysen. Philosophie und Politik—Historie und Philologie*, ed. Stefan Rebenich and Hans-Ulrich Wiemer (Frankfurt: Campus, 2012), 159–188.

Droysen abstains from the notion that the customs, feelings and thoughts of the (Aryan) Persians had been decisively changed under Ancient Near Eastern (or Semitic) influence; this idea became more and more relevant in the 19th century—not least in the context of racial history—and it can still be found today in popular narratives. However, what can also be found in Droysen is the view expressed by the authors of German Idealism that Western thought is characterized by historical consciousness and that only people with self-knowledge—which their adepts deny the Orientals—are able to look at things objectively. There is also the idea of “oriental despotism” that straitjackets kings and subjects in irrevocable and indispensable roles—cruel conqueror and despot here, ‘slaves’ there. And Droysen hardly tries to gain a better understanding of the knowledge cultures of Egyptians, Babylonians, or Phoenicians, nor to measure them by their own standards or to guard against stereotypical descriptions of cultural or ethnical “peculiarities”. It comes therefore as no surprise that Droysen negatively assessed the traditional religions of the Orient, apart from Zoroastrianism, and the role of their hierarchical priesthoods, and that he ascribed the rational spirit of the Greeks the task of decomposing both.

Droysen and His Book on Alexander (1833)¹⁷

(Alexander’s campaign was) not the adventure of a brutal conqueror, it was not the beginning of corruption, devastation, and killing, which normally follow the terrible weapons of the Asian conquerors. Alexander

17 The authoritative books and articles on Droysen’s views of Alexander and their predecessors are: Reinhold Bichler, “Wie lange wollen wir noch mit Alexander dem Großen siegen? Karl Christ zum Gedenken”, in *ib.*, *Historiographie—Ethnographie—Utopie. Gesammelte Schriften*, part 3, ed. Robert Rollinger and Brigitte Truschneegg (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 207–240, particularly pp. 207–218. Originally published in *Alte Geschichte zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik. Gedenkschrift Karl Christ*, ed. Volker Losemann (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 25–64, particularly pp. 25–38; Albert Brian Bosworth, “Alexander the Great and the Creation of the Hellenistic Age”, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World*, ed. Glenn R. Bugh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 9–26; *ib.*, “Johann Gustav Droysen, Alexander the Great and the Creation of the Hellenistic Age”, in *Alexander and His Successors: Essays from the Antipodes*, ed. Pat Wheatley and Robert Hannah (Claremont: Regina Books, 2009), 1–27; *ib.*, “Foreword”, in Johann Gustav Droysen, *History of Alexander the Great*, transl. from the German by Flora Kimmich (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2012), xv–xxi; Briant, *Alexander the Great*, 77–85; *ib.*, *Alexandre des Lumières. Fragments d’histoire européenne* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012); *ib.*, *Alexandre. Exégèse des lieux communs* (Paris: Gallimard, 2016).

fulfilled ... the work ... (of being) a champion of the Hellenistic way of life that was to give its name to the next centuries and to prepare the place for Christianity and Islam, and of being the founder of global communication, transportation and trade and of a world monarchy which found its basis and its purpose in the unity of Hellenic culture.¹⁸

In this quotation, we can see how Droysen wanted to see Alexander, whose fascinating figure dominates the “Geschichte Alexanders des Großen” of 1833, in that same year: on the one hand, as absolutely positive historical personality, on the other hand, as the initiator of a development with huge historical consequences. Droysen’s Alexander is the “rational hero, bearer of a clear plan and long-term vision, careful to put a policy of collaboration with the Persians into effect, and to open new trade-routes to enhance the empire’s unity, in particular the maritime route between the Indus and Babylonia”.¹⁹ According to Droysen, however, Alexander’s world-historical task was mainly to fuse Orient and Occident:

In the course of ten years, an entire world had been discovered and conquered, the barriers between East and West had fallen, and routes had been opened to connect henceforth the lands where the sun rises with the lands where it sets. An ancient writer recounts: ‘the elements of all tribal life were once mixed in a loving cup, and the peoples all drank from this cup; they forgot their old enmities and their sense of powerlessness.’ ... The elements which Alexander united with one another are, in their last forms, the burning vitality of the Hellenic world (*die brennende Lebendigkeit des Griechenthums*), which lacked matter (*Stoff*), and

18 Johann Gustav Droysen, “Die Schlacht am Hydaspes”, in *Zeitschrift für Kunst, Wissenschaft und Geschichte des Krieges* 28 (1833): 189: “(Alexanders Feldzug war) nicht das Abenteuer eines wüsten Eroberers, nicht der Beginn von Verderbniß, Verwüstung und Ertödtung, wie sie den furchtbaren Waffen der asiatischen Eroberer zu folgen pflegen. Alexander vollendete ... das Werk ..., Vorkämpfer des hellenistischen Lebens (zu sein), das den nächsten Jahrhunderten ihren Namen geben, für das Christenthum und den Islam die Stätte bereiten sollte, Begründer eines Weltverkehrs und einer Weltmonarchie, die in der Einheit der hellenischen Bildung ihre Basis und ihren Zweck fand.”

19 Briant, *Alexander the Great*, 80. On the significance of “historical geography” in the conception of Carl Ritter for Droysen’s attempt to prove the rationality of Alexander’s policy and warfare, see Hans-Ulrich Wiemer, “Quellenkritik, historische Geographie und immanente Teleologie in Johann Gustav Droysens ‘Geschichte Alexanders des Großen’”, in *Johann Gustav Droysen. Philosophie und Politik—Historie und Philologie*, ed. Stefan Rebenich and Hans-Ulrich Wiemer (Frankfurt: Campus, 2012), 105–113.

the dead masses of the Asiatic peoples (*die erstorbenen Massen des asiatischen Völkerthums*), which lacked life; both needed each other. Hellas was now finally filled with the superabundance of Asia, and Alexander finished the great work which Dionysus had begun for the Hellenes. Now at last, Asia drank to the full from the Hellenic spirit, and the dormant life of the nations awoke more refined.²⁰

It is in Babylon in the year 331 BC. that Droysen's Macedonian king, with clever foresight, departs from the policy of his despotic Persian precursors and opens up a new era:

Thus he won over the peoples by returning them to themselves and their native way of live; he enabled them to participate actively and immediately in the fabric of the rule he intended to establish, where the differences between the lands of the setting sun and those of the rising sun, between Hellenes and barbarians, that had dominated history would give way to the unity of a universal monarchy.²¹

20 Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders des Großen* (Hamburg: Perthes, 1833), 545 f.: "In einer Zeit von zehn Jahren war eine Welt entdeckt und erobert worden, waren Millionen für den Thron eines Fremdlings gewonnen und mit dem Geiste eines fremden Welttheils neu belebt worden, waren die Schranken gefallen, die Morgen- und Abendland schieden, und die Wege geöffnet, die fortan die Länder des Aufganges und Niederganges mit einander vereinen sollten. Ein alter Schriftsteller sagt: wie in einem Becher der Liebe waren die Elemente alles Völkerlebens in einander gemischt, und die Völker tranken gemeinsam aus diesem Becher, und vergaßen der alten Feindschaft und der eigenen Ohnmacht. ... Die Elemente, die Alexander mit einander vereinte, sind in ihren letzten Formen die brennende Lebendigkeit des Griechenthums, dem es an Stoff, die erstorbenen Massen des Asiatischen Völkerthums, dem es an Leben gebracht; Beide bedurften einander; nun endlich sättigte sich Hellas an der Ueberfülle Asiens und Alexander vollendete das große Werk, das Dionysos den Hellenen begonnen; nun endlich trank Asien in vollen Zügen von dem Hellenischen Geiste und das schlummernde Leben der Völker erwachte geläuterter." (The first part of the quotation follows the translation of Flora Kimmich). In the 2nd edition of 1877 (*Geschichte des Hellenismus*, Bd. 1, 2. Halbbd. (Gotha: Perthes, 1877), 298) the pathetic formulations of the second part of the quotation have been omitted.

21 Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders*, 235: "So gewann er die Völker für sich, indem er sie sich selbst und ihrem volkstümlichen Leben wiedergab; so machte er sie fähig, auf tätige und unmittelbare Weise in den Zusammenhang des Reiches, in dem die Unterschiede von Abend und Morgen, von Hellenen und Barbaren, wie sie bis dahin die Geschichte beherrscht hatten, untergehen sollten zu der Einheit einer Weltmonarchie." (English translation by Flora Kimmich).

In other words, it is Alexander's duty to end the primordial struggle between the two worlds, the Orient and the Occident, to the mutual benefit of the two and of all human beings:

But Alexander wanted more than just to conquer. Under the aegis of the Hellenic life, he wanted to restore in the peoples of his empire the enjoyment and the awareness of their identity, which had been forcibly and therefore vainly repressed by the Persians. In this way he wanted to enable the great idea of a complete fusion of the two to gain more space and strength.²²

Three years later, however, in the introduction to the first volume of the "Geschichte des Hellenismus", Alexander, as has rightly been emphasized,²³ recedes "behind the higher, metaphysical powers" insofar as he is now only a "tool in the hand of History":

He himself was a tool in the hand of History. This fusion of Occidental and Oriental life, which he might have conceived as a means of securing his conquests, was History's purpose for which she allowed him to be victorious. She led him out as far as this new life was to take root. East and West were ripe to fuse, rapid decomposition (*Durchgährung*) and transformation took place on either side, and the newly awakened life of the peoples led to ever new and further developments in state and scholarship, in commerce and art, and in religion and custom.²⁴

22 Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders*, 202: "Indes wollte Alexander mehr als unterwerfen; es sollte den Völkern seines Reiches der Genuß und das Bewußtsein ihrer durch die Perser gewaltsam und darum vergebens zurückgedrängten Volkstümlichkeit unter der Ägide des griechischen Lebens zurückgegeben werden, damit der große Gedanke einer völligen Verschmelzung beider desto leichter Raum und Kraft gewönne."

23 Bichler, *Hellenismus*, 76 f.

24 Droysen, *Geschichte des Hellenismus* I, 4f.: "Er selbst war ein Werkzeug in der Hand der Geschichte; jene Verschmelzung des abend- und morgenländischen Lebens, die er als Mittel, seine Eroberungen zu sichern, beabsichtigen mochte, war der Geschichte der Zweck, um deß Willen sie ihm zu siegen gewährte; sie führte ihn hinaus, so weit das neue Leben Wurzel schlagen sollte; Osten und Westen war zur Verschmelzung reif, schnell erfolgte von beiden Seiten Durchgährung und Umgestaltung; und das neu erwachte Völk-erleben ward zu immer neuen und weiteren Entwicklungen in Staat und Wissenschaft, in Handel und Kunst, in Religion und Sitte."

With regard to the economic progress caused by Alexander, Droysen referred to the monetization of the precious metals hoarded by the Persian kings in the royal treasuries and their integration into the economic cycle, the renunciation of levies in kind, the transformation of the royal court into a place where wealth was generated and distributed, the great (infrastructural and construction) works in Greece and Asia, the creation of new trade routes through the elimination of cataracts in the Tigris and, finally, the establishment of direct connections between the Indus region and Babylon. In Droysen's view, all these new initiatives went back to Alexander himself:

It has already been mentioned above that under Alexander's rule everything worked together in such a way that the industriousness of the peoples and their contact with each other were revived, sometimes newly developed. Perhaps we have never seen one single man's influence producing such an enormous and such a sudden transformation of the conditions regarding these areas. This transformation was not the result of mere accidental circumstances, but it was wanted by the king and deliberately and consistently pursued.²⁵

It has rightly been emphasized that Droysen's (and his predecessors', see below) idea of the civilizer Alexander goes back to Arrian and, not least, to Plutarch's *De Fortuna Alexandri* (e.g. I.5, 18).²⁶

When Droysen wrote his *Alexander* in 1833, and shortly thereafter his "Geschichte des Hellenismus" in two volumes, he did not enter into any thematic or theoretical-methodical new territory. Alexander had already been the object of intense historical and philosophical thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Also, popular ideas (see the opening quotation of Green) about our author having been the first who had worked source-critically and thus historically and scientifically, are incorrect. Especially in recent years, it has been rightly and extensively emphasized that Droysen profited enormously from the historiographical efforts of his predecessors and that he also

25 Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders*, 543: "Bereits oben ist angeführt worden, wie unter Alexanders Regierung Alles zusammen wirkte, die Betriebsamkeit und den Verkehr der Völker neu zu beleben und zum Theil erst zu erwecken; vielleicht nie wieder ist von dem persönlichen Einfluss eines Mannes eine so ungeheure und so plötzliche Umgestaltung aller hierauf bezüglichen Verhältnisse ausgegangen; sie war nicht das glückliche Ergebniß zusammentreffender Zufälligkeiten, sondern von dem Könige bezweckt und mit bewußter Consequenz durchgeführt."

26 Cf. lastly Briant, *Alexandre. Exégèse*, 376 f.

on a large scale relied on their judgments or criticized them.²⁷ Today we even know that others had already come to similar conclusions before him or at the same time—without being duly appreciated by him, such as the particularly inspiring Scottish historian John Gillies.²⁸ Thus, in many respects, Droysen's Alexander corresponds to the Alexander of Montesquieu and other Enlighteners; those Alexanders, with their specific Eurasian-historical background—not least “the competition for India” and the “prelude to the ‘Great Game’”²⁹—had come to Droysen's notice directly and indirectly.

On the other hand: if we draw a comparison with the later German historiography of Alexander, Droysen and the generations before him had, in decisive points, also advanced much further than their successors, for example as regards the special historiographical attention paid to the Achaemenid Empire as the great opponent of Alexander. This holds true even though stereotypical descriptions of the Orient and the Persians were the rule, and though, in Droysen's second edition of the “Geschichte des Hellenismus” of 1877/78, the Near Eastern material, which had since been discovered and evaluated, did not receive its fair share.³⁰

Similar to the divergent verdicts of the Alexander authors of antiquity, the judgments of Droysen's German predecessors and contemporaries on the personality, the achievements and the world-historical significance of the king of Macedon varied enormously.³¹ Barthold Georg Niebuhr, the son of the great cosmopolitan and enlightened traveller Carsten Niebuhr, acknowledged Alexander's role as the founder of Europe's (justified) rule over Asia and as an indirect pathfinder for Christianity, while at the same time criticizing him by referring to his numerous atrocities as a brutal despot.³² The philosopher Ludwig Flathe, on the other hand, admired Alexander's fights and actions on his cam-

27 Guillaume Emmanuel Joseph Guilhem de Sainte-Croix (1746–1809) is mentioned in a very special way in this context, not least because Droysen himself frequently mentions him critically; for Droysen and Sainte-Croix, see Wiemer, *Quellenkritik*, 97–105.

28 Briant, *Alexander the Great*; ib., *Alexandre*; ib., *Alexandre. Exégèse, passim*.

29 Briant, *Alexander the Great*, 80.

30 Droysen's Orient is up to the end ultimately the Orient of the Bible and above all that of the “Classical”, the Greek and Roman literature. The Near Eastern material, which gradually became known in Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century by means of a deciphering of texts, of excavations, and of travel reports, is already mentioned occasionally, but not really used.

31 For the following remarks, cf. particularly Bichler, *Wie lange*, 211–217.

32 Barthold Georg Niebuhr, *Historische und philologische Vorträge an der Universität zu Bonn gehalten*. 2. Abt.: *Alte Geschichte nach Justins Folge mit Ausschluß der römischen Geschichte*, ed. Marcus Niebuhr, vols. 2–3 (Berlin: Reimer, 1848–1851). On the still popular discourse

paing in Asia, but at the same time pointed out that Alexander (and Philip II) had oppressed the freedom of Greece. Flathe had also criticized the fact that the empire created by Alexander did not at all meet “the demands of the life of peoples” (*Anforderungen des Völkerlebens*) as it “killed their spirit, full of freedom and independence” (*den Geist voller Freiheit und Selbstständigkeit ... ertödtete(t)*) and prepared “their minds for the quiet bearing of foreign (Roman, J.W.) tyranny” (*die Gemüther für das ruhige Dulden fremder (römischer, J.W.) Gewaltherrschaft*).³³ And Friedrich Schlegel, a Catholic convert and monarchist, who as a youth had been an admirer of Alexander, wrote in his lectures in 1828: “... in Alexander the Great, an oriental striving is unmistakable ... and I want to call it an Asian enthusiasm, which irresistibly carried him away”.³⁴

Droysen's consistently positive image of Alexander came therefore as a surprise in Germany in his time, and it also encountered substantial reservations for a long time. Those reservations could potentially be strengthened by a negative assessment of the consequences of Alexander's policy for Greece, the Hellenistic world of states, Greek culture etc. Scholars have also rightfully referred to the influence of George Grote's “History of Greece” in Germany, which barred the way to a success of Droysen's *Alexander*. Grote drew Alexander as a military genius and a king who, although aimless, opened up the Oikumene economically, communicatively, and infrastructurally. However, first and foremost, he associated him with the loss of the Greek ideals of freedom, and he also denied Alexander's “grand and beneficent views on the subject of imperial government and (that) his intentions (were) highly favourable to the improvement of mankind”, or that the “Hellenization of Asia” was effective.³⁵ Instead, he saw Alexander as the successor of the Persian kings, a man who “desired

on Alexander the “butcher” vs. Alexander the “pacifier” and “unifier of mankind” see the justified comments of Briant, *Alexander the Great*, 80 f.

- 33 Ludwig Flathe, *Geschichte Macedoniens und der Reiche, welche von macedonischen Königen beherrscht wurden*, 2 parts (Leipzig: Barth, 1832–1834); quotation: I, 6 f.
- 34 Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophie der Geschichte. In achtzehn Vorlesungen gehalten zu Wien im Jahre 1828*, ed. Jean-Jacques Anstett (Kritische Schlegel-Ausgabe, Bd. 9) (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1979), 174: “... in Alexander dem Großen selbst ist ein orientalisches Streben unverkennbar ... und ich möchte es eine asiatische Begeisterung nennen, was ihn ... unwiderstehlich fortriß”.
- 35 Georg Grote, *Geschichte Griechenlands*, VI. Band, erste Abtheilung (Leipzig: Verlag der Dyk'schen Buchhandlung, 1856), 628: “große(n) und wohlthätige(n) Verwaltungspläne und für die Veredlung der Menschheit in hohem Grade günstige(n) Absichten”—“Hellenisirung Asiens” (English original: *A History of Greece*, vol. 12 (London: John Murray, 1856), 352).

nothing better than to take up the traditions of the Persian empire: a tribute-levying and army-levying system, under Macedonians, in large proportion, as his instruments ...”³⁶

It was postulated that Droysen’s very positive assessment of Alexander is not fully explained with his view of Alexander as “‘manager’ (*Geschäftsführer*) of the World Spirit” and his positive evaluation of the reconciliation of Greeks and Orientals. A morally good Alexander, although not necessary in the philosophy of history, had, however, “facilitated the (readers’, J.W.) identification with him”, and thus the intellectual bridging between antiquity and the present.³⁷ “By applying his idea of the historic mission of Prussia to the Macedonian kings, he (Droysen, J.W.) saw in Philipp and Alexander no longer the foreign rulers, but the champions of national unity.”³⁸ At the time, the neo-humanist-classicist historiography and the vast majority of the philologists and archaeologists had assumed that Classical Greece would have been viable beyond Alexander’s rule and that the Macedonian king had, as it were, been its grave-digger. Conversely, Droysen not only thought that Greece had died a natural death, but even accredited modernity to the age of Hellenism. However, the analogy between Macedonia and Prussia only became successful after the Wars of German Unification, but then remained popular. Against the thesis of such an analogy, it has rightly been pointed out, however, that Alexander’s conquests and the resulting world of states were, even in Droysen’s verdict, “not really a historical model for a nation-state mission.” “Droysen did not retroactively blame Alexander for this flaw, but it shows that Alexander is badly suited as a medium for advertising a nation-state.”³⁹ On the other hand, in the case of a clear Prussian analogy, the very positive reception of the work in Great Britain (by, e.g., Connop Thirlwall) and France (by Victor Duruy) would be hard to explain.

36 Grote, *Geschichte*, 629: “nichts Besseres begehrte (als) ... ein tributerhebendes und truppenaushebendes System unter Makedoniern in der Ueberzahl als seinen Werkzeugen ...” (English original: *A History of Greece*, vol. 12, 354). For Grote’s view of (Droysen’s) Alexander, see Briant, *Alexandre. Exégèse*, 445 f.; cf. also Briant, “Alexandre et l’hellenisation de l’Asie: l’histoire au passé et au présent”, in: *Studi Ellenistici* 16 (2005): 18–27.

37 Alexander Demandt, “Politische Aspekte im Alexanderbild der Neuzeit. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Methodenkritik”, in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 64 (1972): 325–363, particularly p. 330.

38 Demandt, *Aspekte*, 331: “Indem er (Droysen, J.W.) seine Vorstellung von der historischen Mission Preußens auf das makedonische Königtum übertrug, sah er in Philipp und Alexander nicht länger die Fremdherrscher, sondern die Vorkämpfer nationaler Einheit.”

39 Bichler, *Wie lange*, 218: “Dieses Manko wurde zwar bei Droysen nicht rückwirkend Alexander angelastet, aber es lässt doch erkennen, dass sich Alexander nur schlecht als Werbeträger einer nationalstaatlichen Botschaft eignet.” Cf. also Rebenich, “Zur Droysen-

The Characteristics of the 2nd Edition of the “Geschichte Alexanders des Großen” (1877)⁴⁰

Apart from formal differences—the incorporation of *Alexander* as volume 1 into the second edition of the “Geschichte des Hellenismus”, its presentation as a strictly scientific text (with subdivisions into books and chapters, with tables of contents, appendices etc.), the implicit correction of factual errors, the incorporation of new material (but see above) and the renouncement of outdated information or too poetic or pathetic formulations—the text and the main arguments of the work remained unchanged. Only few ideas were revoked: above all, speculations about the further course of world history and the presentation of the fusion of nations as the fulfillment of a (maternal) dream, etc.⁴¹ Instead, the following thoughts were emphasized: Alexander’s creative will,⁴² the possibility for the historian to replace the psychological interpretation, which he is not allowed to use, with another one which assesses “historical figures ... in the (context, J.W.) of their relationship to the great

Rezeption in der Alten Geschichte”, in *Johann Gustav Droysen. Philosophie und Politik—Historie und Philologie*, ed. Stefan Rebenich and Hans-Ulrich Wiemer (Frankfurt: Campus, 2012), 458f.

40 Authoritative is: Wiemer, *Quellenkritik*, 124–132. Reinhold Bichler is preparing a small study on the prefaces and epilogues of the different editions and translations of Droysen’s *Alexander* (personal communication).

41 Cf. the formulations: “And as on the first day of Creation God separated the light from the darkness, and there was evening and there was morning, the first day, so the first day of history separated the peoples of Occident and Orient for the first time to eternal enmity and eternal desire for reconciliation. For it governs the life of the created to consume itself and to sink back into the old peaceful night of the uncreated beginning; therefore, the peoples of Occident and Orient are engaged in the struggle of destruction; they long for eternal peace” (“Und wie an dem ersten Schöpfungstage Gott das Licht von der Finsterniß schied, und aus Abend und Morgen der erste Tag war, so hat der erste Tag der Geschichte die Völker aus Abend und Morgen zum ersten Male geschieden zu ewiger Feindschaft und dem ewigen Verlangen der Versöhnung; denn es ist das Leben des Geschaffenen, sich aufzuzehren und zurückzusinken in die alte friedliche Nacht des ungeschaffenen Anfangs; drum ringen die Völker aus Abend und Morgen den Kampf der Vernichtung; sie sehnen sich nach endlicher Ruhe”) or “Olympia’s dream was fulfilled, the flame of her lap, of which she had dreamed in her bridal night, had kindled the countries of the world ...” (“Olympias Traum war erfüllt, die Flamme ihres Schooßes, von der sie in der Brautnacht geträumt, hatte die Länder der Welt entzündet ...”) (Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders*, 1 and 545).

42 Droysen, *Geschichte des Hellenismus*², vol. 1 (Gotha: Perthes, 1877), II, 287–289.

historical achievements or creations ...",⁴³ and, finally, Droysen's "increased sensitivity for the antinomy between morality and success".⁴⁴

The Reception of Droysen's *Alexander*⁴⁵

The great renaissance of Droysen's *Alexander*, though not necessarily his view of Alexander, did not begin in the author's lifetime, but only after his death. It came about in a special way around the 100th anniversary of the publication of *Alexander* in 1933. Apart from a new edition of the book, to which Helmut Berve wrote an introduction (1931),⁴⁶ and an article by Arnaldo Momigliano on the occasion of the jubilee,⁴⁷ several works on Alexander were published almost simultaneously: the books by Georges Radet (1931),⁴⁸ by Ulrich Wilcken (1931)⁴⁹ and by Roberto Andreotti (1933),⁵⁰ the French translation of Droysen's *Alexander* by Jacques Benoist-Méchin (1935) with the translator's lavish praise for Droysen and Benoist-Méchin's political diagnosis of the time,⁵¹ as well as the

43 Droysen, *Geschichte des Hellenismus*², I, 206: "die Persönlichkeiten ... in dem (Zusammenhang, j.w.) ihres Verhältnisses zu den großen geschichtlichen Leistungen oder Schöpfungen ... auffaßt".

44 Wiemer, *Quellenkritik*, 131.

45 Vgl. Briant, *Alexandre. Exégèse*, 378–380; Rebenich, *Droysen-Rezeption*, 453–484.

46 Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders des Großen. Neudruck der Herausgabe* (Berlin und Leipzig: Kröner, 1931); Introduction of Berve: pp. VII–XXXIV. For Berve and Droysen, see Rebenich, *Droysen-Rezeption*, 471 f.

47 Arnaldo Momigliano, "Per il centenario dell'*Alessandro Magno* di J.G. Droysen. Un contributo", in *Leonardo* 4 (1933): 510–516.

48 Georges Radet, *Alexandre le Grand* (Paris: L'Artisan du Livre, 1931).

49 Ulrich Wilcken, *Alexander der Große* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1931).

50 Roberto Andreotti, *Il problema politico di Alessandro Magno* (Parma: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1933). Andreotti, however, was very critical both of the view of Alexander as a man of great ideas and of using the king for political diagnoses of the time.

51 Johann Gustav Droysen, *Histoire d'Alexandre le Grand*. Traduit de l'allemand et préfacé par Jacques Benoist-Méchin (Paris: Grasset, 1935). For the translator, see Briant, *Alexandre. Exégèse*, 299–308. A French translation of the 2nd edition of the "Geschichte des Hellenismus" had already been published under the authority of August Bouché-Leclercq between 1883 and 1885: *Histoire de l'Hellénisme*. Traduite de l'allemand sous la direction d'Auguste Bouché-Leclercq, t. 1–3 (Paris: E. Leroux, 1883–1885). This translation was reedited, with a detailed preface, a note on the French translation, and two bibliographical essays by Pascal Payen, in 2005: Johann Gustav Droysen, *Histoire de l'Hellénisme*, édition intégrale, t. 1–2 (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 2005).

epoch-making article of William Tarn on the “Unity of Mankind” (1933).⁵² The special importance of Wilcken as the administrator of the Droysen heritage has already been mentioned frequently. In 1894, he had already reissued Droysen’s dissertation of 1831 on Ptolemy IV⁵³ and commented on it extensively.⁵⁴ And in his 1931 book on Alexander, Wilcken not only recognized Droysen’s pioneering study as “fundamental and inspiring”, but also followed his model in many ways, like in his presentation of Alexander as the “great economist”.⁵⁵ The fact that Droysen’s Alexander is still *en vogue*, as regards content or, at least, the history of scholarship, is shown by the numerous translations of the *Alexander* or even the “Geschichte des Hellenismus” (mostly, however, their second editions).⁵⁶ And there is still a debate going on about the rationality of Alexander’s plans and actions so heavily argued for by Droysen himself.⁵⁷ It has rightly been emphasised that Droysen’s “anti-classicalism”, his “cultural-historical system” and his important “theory of historical knowledge” are still relevant.⁵⁸ If his enlightened providers of ideas and their achievements as well as the *orientalischen Volksthümlichkeiten*, which found both their and Droysen’s interest, also found adequate treatment in all contemporary books on Alexander, a lot would be gained.

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52 William W. Tarn, “Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind”, in *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1933): 3–46.

53 Droysen, *De Lagidarum regno Ptolemaeo IV Philometore rege* (Berlin: Eisersdorff, 1831).

54 Droysen, *Kleine Schriften zur Alten Geschichte*, ed. Emil Hübner, Bd. 2 (Leipzig: Veit & Comp., 1894), 351–432 (with supplementary and correcting notes by Ulrich Wilcken).

55 For Wilcken and Droysen, see Briant, “Alexander and the Persian Empire, between ‘Decline’ and ‘Renovation’”, in *Alexander the Great. A New History*, ed. Waldemar Heckel and Lawrence A. Tritle (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 171–188, particularly pp. 180 f.

56 Wiemer, *Quellenkritik*, 95 f.; Briant, *Alexandre. Exégèse*, 379 f.

57 Cf. the unjustly harsh critique of Wiemer on Briant: Wiemer, *Quellenkritik*, 137–139.

58 Rebenich, *Droysen-Rezeption*, 475–477.

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“The Unmanly Ruler”: Bagoas, Alexander’s Eunuch Lover, Mary Renault’s *The Persian Boy*, and Alexander Reception

Elizabeth Baynham and Terry Ryan

Lest anyone should suppose I am a son of nobody, sold off by some peasant father in a drought year, I may say our line is an old one, although it ends with me. My father was Artembares, son of Araxis, of the Pasargadai of Kyros’ old royal tribe.¹



So speaks Bagoas, the protagonist of Mary Renault’s *The Persian Boy*, the second novel in her Alexander trilogy first published in 1972, which portrays Alexander and his years of conquest through the gaze of his Persian lover, the eunuch Bagoas.² Although the novel is over 40 years old, it remains popular and well regarded to this day.³

In these opening lines of Renault’s novel, Bagoas emphasizes his credentials by defining his ethnicity through his father’s name and tribe. The statement

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- 1 Mary Renault’s first novel in the Alexander trilogy was *Fire From Heaven* (1969). All references and pagination to *The Persian Boy* in this chapter are from the 2014 Virago edition, *The Persian Boy*, with an Introduction by Tom Holland. “Mary Renault” was a *nom de plume*—she was born Eileen Mary Challans; on her life and work, see the fine biography, *Mary Renault* by David Sweetman (London, 1993).
 - 2 Bagoas plays a very minor role in the third volume of the trilogy, *Funeral Games*, which focuses upon the aftermath of Alexander’s death, and the wars of the Diadochoi down to about 308 BC. As that novel is narrated in the third person, we are removed from Bagoas’ thoughts and perspective. Although he is depicted as devoted to Alexander, and devastated by his loss, he emerges as a rather dark figure, described as ‘the most dangerous man at court’. However, this interpretation is designed to reflect the perceptions of both the Persian courtiers and Alexander’s powerful marshals who view Bagoas with suspicion.
 - 3 See the range of public reviews displayed on Amazon.com: <https://www.amazon.com/Persian-Boy-Mary-Renault/dp/0394751019>.

is also an echo of ancient Greek historiographical practice: Bagoas begins by giving his name, his place of origin and in his case, fictitious genealogy, although the Pasargardae tribe itself was not only real, but Persian blue blood nobility (cf. Hdt. 1.125). Bagoas also alludes to his previous status as a slave and his childlessness; the reasons for both these aspects are an important part of the novel.

The figure of Bagoas offers a rich mix of issues and themes in Alexander reception, as well as interest for those researchers engaged in gender and sexuality studies. He is relatively well represented in ancient literature,⁴ featuring in Aelian (VH 3.23) and Athenaeus (13.603 a–b) as well as two of the main Alexander sources, Quintus Curtius Rufus (6.5.23; 10.1.22–38, 42) and Plutarch (*Alex.* 67.7–8; *Mor.* 65d), but not in Justin, Diodorus Siculus or Arrian. His omission from Justin and Diodorus can perhaps be explained by the selectivity inevitably associated with the genre of these sources; Diodorus was writing a universal history, and Justin compiled an epitome of an earlier universal historian, Pompeius Trogus, who was also a near contemporary of Diodorus. Interestingly enough, Bagoas is also absent from Pseudo Callisthenes, the basis of the many derivatives of the *Alexander Romance*, or the fictitious traditions on Alexander the Great.

More intriguing is Arrian's failure to mention Alexander's Bagoas at all in his history of Alexander; he also leaves out any reference to Alexander's other lovers, including Barsinê, daughter of Artabazus, by whom Alexander allegedly fathered a son called Heracles.⁵ It is true, as Bosworth noted, that Arrian's focus is on the king's *erga*—or deeds⁶—rather than his courtiers or his sexual partners, and he tends to mention personal details only when he feels that they have particular relevance to his narrative; for example, the animosity which existed between Antipater, Alexander's regent of Macedonia, and his mother, Olympias.⁷ Yet Arrian, an animal lover himself,⁸ for once makes an exception

4 H. Berve, ii, no. 195; cf. Waldemar Heckel, *Who's Who in the Age of Alexander the Great* (London, 2006), 68.

5 Justin 11.10.2–3; see Berve ii, no. 206; Waldemar Heckel, *Who's Who in the Age of Alexander the Great* (London, 2006) 70.

6 A.B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander* vol. 1 (Oxford, 1980), 14.

7 Arrian, *Anab.* 7. 12. 5–7; Arrian evidently was writing more about Alexander's high regard for Antipater, but the text breaks off in a short lacuna.

8 Arrian, *Cyn.* 5.1–6. Arrian, although highly conscious of appropriate subjects being given literary immortality, wrote what is possibly one of the most loving tributes to an animal in all of Western literature, namely to his faithful hunting bitch, Horme. See P.A. Stadter, *Arrian*

to the dignity of history⁹ and gives a brief encomium of Alexander's favourite charger, Bucephalas, because he acknowledges (*Anab.* 5.19.6) that the horse was important to Alexander (cf. p. 595).

It also seems highly unlikely that Arrian, given his own wide research, had not come across references to Alexander's lovers, including his eunuch boyfriend. Badian's previously stated—and indeed valid—explanation of Arrian's omission of Bagoas is that neither of Arrian's main sources, Ptolemy or Aristobulus had included him¹⁰—in much the same way that Ptolemy perhaps omitted the Athenian *hetaera* Thais (one of his own partners, and mother of three of his children), and her role in encouraging Alexander to destroy Xerxes' palace at Persepolis.¹¹

The historicity of Bagoas' existence was denied in modern scholarship—famously (or notoriously) by W.W. Tarn; for Tarn, Alexander's Bagoas was the fabrication of a hostile Peripatetic tradition derived from Dicaearchus (cf. *Athen.* 13.603 a–b), and which had its origins in the death of Aristotle's great-nephew and Alexander's official publicist, the historian Callisthenes.¹² Although Tarn remained a private scholar, his work was extremely influential. He was celebrated by British academics, particularly Frank Adcock at Cambridge University, and he dominated Alexander research in English in the first half of the twentieth century.¹³ Tarn died in 1957; his views on Bagoas were convincingly refuted a year later by E. Badian, who exposed the inconsistencies and

of *Nicomedia* (Chapel Hill, 1980) 54–59, who, while highlighting Arrian's debt to Xenophon's earlier work on hunting, does not doubt Arrian's own genuine affection for his dog; cf. A.B. Bosworth, "Arrian and Rome: The Minor Works", *ANRW* ii 34. 1 (1993): 233–238.

9 See A.B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*, vol. ii (Oxford, 1995), 315–316, who observes that Arrian made an exception for Bucephalas, but not for Alexander's dogs, Peritas and Triakes, which are also recorded in the ancient literature.

10 See E. Badian, "The Eunuch Bagoas", *Classical Quarterly* 8, 3–4 (1958), 144–157, at 149–150.

11 See Eugene N. Borza's comment, "Fire from Heaven", *Classical Philology* 67. 4 (1972) 233–245, especially 235, n. 12; any attempt to explain Ptolemy's motives depends on making assumptions about his feelings towards the destruction of Persepolis as well as Thais, and we cannot know either. However, on the link between Thais and the fall of Orxines in Rufus' treatment of both episodes, see below, n. 60.

12 W.W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, vol. II (Cambridge, 1948), 320–323.

13 On Tarn's widespread influence; see A.B. Bosworth, "The Impossible Dream: W.W. Tarn's Alexander in Retrospect", *Ancient Society Resources For Teachers* (Macquarie Ancient History Association) 13, no. 3 (1983): 131–150. More recently, see Paul McKechnie, "W.W. Tarn and the Philosophers" *Ancient History Bulletin* 28, 1–2 (2014) 20–23.

flaws in Tarn's methodology and in his use of ancient sources, while remaining deeply respectful of Tarn's overall contribution and his insight.¹⁴

Today, the scholarly community probably broadly accepts the historicity of Alexander's relationship with a Persian youth. What is unusual is that he had a love affair with a eunuch, which is not attested in terms of same sex relationships among Greeks and Macedonians.¹⁵ There are at least two other Persians with the name of Bagoas from the era of Alexander the Great. One was the infamous eunuch Vizier of Artaxerxes III Ochus who engineered the deaths of both Ochus and his son, Arsēs. He promoted Darius III in becoming Great King before being killed by his *protégé*. The other Bagoas is mentioned by Arrian (*Ind.* 8.8) as the son of Pharnuches, and one of Alexander's Persian appointments as a trierarch of his fleet for the return voyage from India. Although is not impossible that Alexander's lover and the naval commander were one and the same person, as Waldemar Heckel has suggested,¹⁶ it is perhaps unlikely that they were, given that the name does not seem to have been unusual in Persia. There is ancient evidence that "Bagoas" was a kind of generic name for a eunuch.¹⁷

Alexander's paramour has also been subject to a considerable hostile response; perhaps largely shaped by the Roman historian, Quintus Curtius Rufus, who, as we shall see, depicts Alexander's eunuch lover as a malicious schemer, intent on destroying an individual of a much higher social status than himself who had insulted him. To some degree Rufus (along with other ancient and modern writers) was probably influenced by the negative stereotyping that has long been associated with eunuchs.¹⁸ Even today in popular culture such stereotyping is alive and well—for example, Lord Varys, 'the Spider', of George R.R. Martin's immensely successful novels and the HBO TV series, *Game of Thrones*. The sly, castrated manipulator still slinks along the corridors of power, working Machiavellian schemes of exquisite complexity.¹⁹ But not all ancient,

14 Badian, "The Eunuch Bagoas", 144–157.

15 See Daniel Ogden, "Alexander's Sex Life" in *Alexander the Great A New History* edits. Waldemar Heckel and Lawrence A. Tritle (London, 2009), 213.

16 Heckel, *Who's Who* 68, with n. 166.

17 Lucian, *The Eunuch*, 6; more commonly cited is Pliny *NH* 13. 41; so Badian, "The Eunuch Bagoas" 144, with n. 5; J.E. Atkinson and J.C. Yardley, *Curtius Rufus, Histories of Alexander the Great, Book 10* (Oxford, 2009), 95; Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander, A History of the Persian Empire*, translated by Peter T. Daniels (Winona Lake, 2002), 270; Ogden, "Alexander's Sex Life" 213, n. 68.

18 Briant, *ibid*, 268–274; eunuchs also receive more favourable ancient 'press', see below, n. 19.

19 Varys becomes a more sympathetic character as the series unfolds, concerned as he

and indeed, modern, fictional portrayals of eunuchs are necessarily negative. A eunuch called Eugenius is the narrator of Robert Graves' biographical novel, *Count Belisarius*, and castrated servants also appear as the protagonists in historical mystery or crime fiction; namely John, Lord Chamberlain to the Emperor Justinian in the novels by Mary Reed and Eric Mayer, and Jason Goodwin's Ottoman eunuch detective, Yashim, in 1830s Istanbul.

In a review in the *London Review of Books* James Davidson drew attention to the lack of modern scholarly interest in sexuality in Alexander studies, despite existing research by scholars who were more broadly concerned with ancient sexual diversity.²⁰ Since then Alexander scholarship has addressed this gap, with important studies by Jeanne Reames and Sabine Müller on Hephaestion,²¹ Marilyn Skinner's contribution on modern theoretical analysis of ancient Greek sexuality and the portrayal of sexuality in Oliver Stone's 2004 film, *Alexander*,²² and Daniel Ogden's articles and comprehensive monograph on the historical Alexander's sexuality.²³ Evidence which at one time was either dismissed as fabrication or ignored, is now given consideration.

is for the 'good of the Realm'—or rather, what he thinks is for its good. In ancient court societies, one reason why eunuchs were prized was their celebrated loyalty and freedom from nepotism, or capacity to found a dynasty of their own; see Briant, *ibid*, 272.

- 20 James Davidson, "Bonkers about Boys" Review of A.B. Bosworth and E.J. Baynham, *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford, 2000), *London Review of Books* Vol. 23, no. 21.1 (November, 2001), 7–10; cf. Bosworth's response, *London Review of Books*, Vol. 24, Letters, Nos. 1–3 (Jan, 2002).
- 21 On Hephaestion; see Jeanne Reames-Zimmerman, "Hephaestion Amyntoros: Eminence Grise at the Court of Alexander the Great" (PhD Diss, The Pennsylvania State University, 1998); "An Atypical Affair? Alexander the Great, Hephaestion Amyntoros, and the Nature of Their Relationship", *AHB* 13.3 3 (1999); 81–96; J. Reames, "The Cult of Hephaestion", in *Responses to Oliver Stone's Alexander*, Paul Cartledge and Fiona Greenland, eds. (Wisconsin, 2010), 183–216; Sabine Müller, "Ptolemaios und die Erinnerung an Hephaistions" *Anabasis*, 3 (2013); 75–92; "But how Beautiful a Myth It Was—Hephaistion zwischen Okzident und Orient in Oliver Stone's *Alexander*" in Arne Borstelmann (edit.) *Antike und Mittelalter in histrischen Spielfilm*, 1 (Hannover, 2014).
- 22 Marilyn B. Skinner, "Alexander and Ancient Greek Sexuality: Some Theoretical Considerations" in *Responses to Oliver Stone's Alexander*, 119–134.
- 23 See Ogden, "Alexander's Sex Life", 203–217, highlighting (204–205, with n. 10) previous modern scholarship on Alexander's sex life including Tarn's Appendix in *Alexander the Great* vol. 11 319–326, and work by other scholars on ancient sexuality (cf. below, n. 44). See also Daniel Ogden, *Alexander the Great, Myth, Genesis and Sexuality* (Exeter, 2011).

Yet historically, the Macedonian king seems to have clearly enjoyed Bagoas' company. Outside of the references in our mainstream sources, Aelian (*VH* 3.23) refers to Alexander, shortly before his death, visiting Bagoas' house, which was located "ten stades" (about a mile) from the royal palace in Babylon; so, far from being a mere court trapping and bed companion, the eunuch seems to have been endowed with his own establishment, and presumably servants. Bagoas disappears from the historical record after this point, and we do not know his fate. But the detail was not lost on Renault; in *Funeral Games*, she portrays Ptolemy warning Bagoas that Perdikkas—who has assumed Alexander's mantle for the moment—will very likely take the house away, and that he, Ptolemy, will offer Bagoas a place at his court in Alexandria, in return for his help in securing Alexander's body.

Bagoas also has been depicted in modern art, film, historical fiction and fantasy. Along with being the narrator of Renault's novel, Bagoas is a character in Jo Graham's novel, *Stealing Fire*. He has been portrayed in medieval iconography; an illustration (ca. 1470–1475) by the Flemish manuscript illuminator, Master of the Jardin de Vertueuse, now in the John Paul Getty Museum, depicts Bagoas pleading for Nabarzanes; the eunuch is shown as a woman in keeping with Vasco da Lucena's translation of (Curtius Rufus') original text (see fig. 25.1).²⁴ Sodoma's famous painting (1517) in the Villa Farnesina of Alexander's wedding to Roxane was based on Lucian's description of an ancient original attributed to Aetion. Lucian identified the youthful and handsome figure standing in front of a male holding the wedding torch (whom Lucian thought was Hephaestion) as the marriage god, Hymen; however, there has been some recent dubious speculation that he represents Bagoas.²⁵

Bagoas (Francesco Bosch) only has a small role in the cinema release version of Stone's film; apparently Stone had originally intended a larger part for the eunuch, but needed to edit the footage shot. The anxieties of the film's producers, especially in the USA market, were major constraints on his 'reception'—something Renault did not need to face.²⁶ *Alexander, The Final Cut* is a much longer movie with two parts broken by an intermission, and a running time of

24 The image is available on the museum's web site; see <http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/5087/master-of-the-jardin-de-vertueuse-consolation-and-assistant-bagoas-pleads-on-behalf-of-nabarzanes-french-and-flemish-about-1470-1475>.

25 Cf. Lucian, *Herodotus sive Aetion* 4–7, with Andrew Stewart, *Faces of Power* (Berkeley, 1993) 40–41, 367–368. On the identification of Bagoas in the painting, see Andrew Michael Chugg, *Alexander's Lovers* (AMC, 2012), 164.

26 See E.J. Baynham, "Power, Passion and Patrons: Alexander, Charles Le Brun and Oliver Stone", in *Alexander the Great A New History*, 294–310, at 300 with n. 27.



FIGURE 25.1 *Bagoas Pleads on Behalf of Nabarzanes (ca. 1470–1475) by the Flemish manuscript illuminator, Master of the Jardin de Vertueuse*

nearly four hours. Stone has stated that he was influenced by Renault's work,²⁷ and the eunuch's relationship with Alexander in this film is far more explicit and more significant. In the one sex scene where the king appears naked, he is shown with Bagoas.

The Persian eunuch also appears in illustrations of Alexander's lovers by Develv. Both men are heavily feminized (see Fig. 25.2).²⁸ Bagoas, wearing flowing, embroidered drapery, bracelets and a bejewelled diadem, is depicted with long, dark hair, beautiful dark eyes shaded with kohl, elegant fingers, long legs, and buxom curves. There is some token acknowledgement of Bagoas' Persian ethnicity—as well as a pronounced similarity to Bosch in several of these images, cartoonish though they are. Although the eunuch's race is a significant part of his identity, he has been portrayed by Hellenocentric ancient sources and through a Western lens.

However, this chapter is focusing on Renault's Bagoas, as well as his reception in ancient Greco-Roman historiography, since the two are closely linked. Renault had developed a passion for Classical literature in translation (especially the works of Plato) in her youth, and she had been fascinated by the figure of Alexander since her student days at St Hugh's College in Oxford.²⁹

Literary, as well as cinematic, 'reception' and reworking of ancient texts and traditions usually adopt the right of creative license. While focusing upon what has been 'received', it is not the priority of modern reception to be constrained by rigid adherence to the sources. The medium of film is a case in point where directorial selectivity overrides time, location, and sequence of events while moving more to focus upon facets of character and episodes that heighten audience involvement.³⁰

27 Oliver Stone, "Afterword" in *Oliver Stone's Alexander*, 351; cf. Robin Lane Fox, "Alexander on Stage: A Critical Appraisal of Rattigan's *Adventure Story*", in *ibid.*, 63; J. Reames, "The Cult of Hephaestion", in *ibid.*, 186 with n. 13.

28 See Develv at Deviant Art: <https://develv.deviantart.com/art/Alexander-the-Great-and-Bagoas-537187059>

See also Ogden, "Alexander's Sex Life", 203.

29 Renault did not have a natural aptitude for Latin and Greek at school; so Sweetman, *Mary Renault* 18; however, she used Loeb texts and was also in close contact with an American classicist, Bernard K. Dick (*The Hellenism of Mary Renault* [Carbondale, 1972]). On her fascination with Alexander, see Sweetman, 256, 258.

30 Maté's *The 300 Spartans* (1962) was filmed at Thermopylae and rendered ridiculous the ancient accounts of the battle, with the Spartans forced to form up in a 'thin red line' to cover the terrain. Snyder's graphic novel representation in *300* (2007) created a fantastic gorge, with sheer sides and heights, to depict the scene. Neither came near displaying the 'Hot Gates' as they were in the ancient sources.



FIGURE 25.2 *Bagoas and Alexander in the forest*
BY DEVELV

The Alexander who comes to us via the historians, biographers, and moralists of the remote past had already undergone extensive 'screening' through the prism of authorial reception. These sources made of him what they perceived and needed him to be—which recalls Badian's powerful image (via A. Heuss) of the 'Alexander Schlauch', or the empty bottle.³¹

31 Elizabeth Baynham, *Alexander the Great, The Unique History of Quintus Curtius* (Ann Arbor, 1998) 62–63, with n. 21; Diana Spencer, *The Roman Alexander, Reading a Cultural Myth* (Exeter, 2002), xiii–xix.

Mary Renault believed that a writer of historical fiction that was set in the ancient world should follow the ancient sources as much as possible.³² Like the 17th century court painter, Charles Le Brun, and other artists who followed the conventions of 'history painting',³³ Renault, although a vivid storyteller, adhered to her methodological principles. For example, she follows Arrian's account in relating that Alexander's horse was stolen by the Uxians, a native people of the Persian Gates;³⁴ the king threatened them that unless Bucephalas was brought back immediately and unharmed, he would sack the Uxians' territory and put them all to the sword. In Renault's novel *Bagoas*, newly arrived at Alexander's camp, witnesses the return of the horse, while hearing from a man called Phoenix the famous story of how the king, as a boy, had calmed and ridden the uncontrollable stallion when King Philip II, disgusted that his own men had been unable to settle Bucephalas, had ordered that he was to be taken away. *Bagoas* describes Phoenix as an old man, and as *Bagoas* questions him further, it is evident that Renault had in mind Lysimachus of Acarnania the character whom Plutarch (*Alex.* 5.4) names as one of Alexander's early tutors.³⁵ This man encouraged Alexander's love of the *Iliad* and his heroic ancestor Achilles, even to the point of calling the young prince "Achilles" and himself "Phoenix".

We also know that "Phoenix" accompanied Alexander's campaigns; according to Chares (*FGrH* 125 F 7 = Plut. *Alex.* 24.6–8) during the siege of Tyre, he endangered Alexander's life by being unable to keep up on an expedition against an Arabian tribe; Alexander stayed with him and became separated from the rest of his squadron, but was able to take the camp of some local natives. Renault uses both stories to highlight the king's devotion to those whom he loves, especially in the eyes of the young and impressionable Persian.

Renault on this occasion is actually more respectful of the ancient traditions than Stone, who has Antigonus the One Eyed—one of Alexander's later Successors—accompany the expedition as a general when historically he was

32 It is perhaps not surprising that Renault admired the "Master and Commander" Napoleonic novels of Patrick O'Brian, which were well known for their attention to technical and historical detail; so Sweetman, 261–262. After the success of her earlier novels, Renault gradually built up a considerable collection of ancient texts and modern scholarship; according to Sweetman, 244, she had the 'best private classical library in sub-Saharan Africa'.

33 Baynham, "Power, Passion and Patrons", 295, 297 with n. 13.

34 Cf. Diod. 17. 76. 3; Curt. 6. 5. 11 who claim the Mardians stole Bucephalas.

35 See Berve II no. 481 and Heckel, *Who's Who*, 153.

left behind as the satrap of Phrygia.³⁶ She also follows Strabo (15.3.9–10)—in a statement which was subsequently picked up by modern scholars—that Alexander preferred Babylon as his future royal capital.

Also, since Plutarch mentions Bagoas' expertise as a singer and dancer (*Alex.* 67.5–6), Renault weaves his athletic training in as a background theme of the novel, having him learn dancing while still with Darius, and imaging the eunuch's increased upper body strength saving him from an intentional rapist (pp. 106–107, 236), in the confusion following Darius' defeat and betrayal by his own nobles. In the novel, Bagoas' creative skill eventually culminates in the acclaimed theatrical performance after the army's drunken return to Carmania (pp. 377–378), in keeping with Plutarch's text. Renault depicts Alexander's kissing of his beloved Persian boy, along with the army's encouragement and roar of approval as a show of their love for their king.³⁷

It is significant that Plutarch describes Bagoas within this context as Alexander's *eromenos*. He could have used *kinaidos* or some other pejorative term—for example, Curtius Rufus (10.1.42) openly calls Bagoas a *scortum* (prostitute)—however, Plutarch accorded the Persian youth (and Alexander) a degree of respectability. Within the context of celebrating the attraction of boys, Dicaearchus mentions (ap. Ath. 13.603 a–b; cf. Plut. *Alex.* 67.7–8) Alexander's liking for boys, highlighting Bagoas' considerable influence over Alexander, and the king's demonstrable affection for him publicly, especially when encouraged by an audience. According to Dicaearchus, Alexander kissed the beautiful Persian youth in a theatre, and when the crowd cheered, he kissed the boy again. It is hard to read the tone of this episode. While our sources seem to suggest the crowd's goodwill, it remains unclear whether their cheering was genuine pleasure at seeing their king express his love for a barbarian eunuch—or sneering mockery. It is also hard to know whether the negative response of our ancient sources, particularly Rufus, is driven more by hostility to Bagoas' ethnicity—he is the Other—or the fact that he is a eunuch.

Bagoas' dancing also features in Stone's *Alexander* although shifted to a different context, so that it takes place at an Indian banquet, and with a darker emphasis. In this instance Alexander's passionate kissing of the eunuch on the mouth in the aftermath of his performance is used to show the king's decadence and his deviation from 'traditional masculinity'—in so far as it has been

36 Arrian, *Anab.* 1. 29. 3; cf. Curt. 4. 1. 35, erroneously claims his satrapy was Lydia; see also Baynham, "Power, Passions and Patrons", 297–298.

37 See Mary Renault, *The Nature of Alexander* (London, 1975) 194, who uses the episode as evidence for Alexander's popularity, even after the Gedrosia crossing.

presented in sword and sandal epics. In Stone's film, a jealous Hephaestion—who was in an *eromenos-erastes* relationship with Alexander—watches in outrage; for Roxane, Alexander's wife, the king loses face before his own people, as well as his foreign guests.³⁸

Where there are gaps in the historical record, Renault supplies her own scenario according to her understanding of plausibility—and she often demonstrates a keen sensitivity. For instance, we know nothing of the childhood or background of Bagoas, only that he was presented as a gift (but a gift who can talk), to the Macedonian king, by Nabarzanes, one of the assassins of the Great King, Darius, in 331 BC in a bid to secure Alexander's pardon. We are told by Curtius Rufus (6.5.23) that Bagoas was a eunuch *in ipso flore pueritiae* ('the very flower of his boyhood') who had been Darius' concubine, but we are given no information about his family and origins.³⁹

Renault imagines Bagoas as a scion of a noble family who are dispossessed and killed by the powerful (and historical) Persian eunuch, Bagoas the Vizier, through the betrayal of another historical Persian aristocrat, Orxines—noticeably also from the Pasargardae tribe—during the turmoil of the assassination of the Great King Arsēs (338–336 BC). Bagoas survives the destruction of his family on account of his looks, but is enslaved and castrated. Eunuchs have been prized as servants in court societies for millennia, but one consequence of pre-pubescent castration is that male secondary sexual characteristics, like facial and body hair, deeper voice and larger penis do not develop. Hence the appearance of attractive youthful boyishness is preserved for as long as possible. Renault also implies that like the famous Italian *castrati* who were prominent as opera singers of the 17th and 18th centuries, Bagoas lost his testicles, but not his penis (cf. pp. 119; 140); her author's note (p. 470), suggests that she envisioned the *castrato* Farinelli as a kind of role model for Bagoas.⁴⁰

38 See the interesting discussion of Jerry B. Pierce, "Oliver Stone's Unmanning of Alexander the Great" in *Screening Love and Sex in the Ancient World* (New York, 2013), Monica S. Cyrino (edit.) 127–141, especially 134–137.

39 See J.E. Atkinson, *A Commentary on Q. Curtius Rufus' Historiae Alexandri Magni Books 5–7.2* (Amsterdam, 1994), 196–197; Ogden, "Alexander's Sex Life" 210, n. 51, notes that the phrase, also used in Curtius Rufus (cf. 4. 8. 7–9) of Hector, the son of Parmenion is 'pederastic phraseology'. However the context is different; in the case of Hector, Alexander is mourning the loss of the son of his great general who has drowned in the Nile; whereas Bagoas is intended as *timē*—to a man who already possessed it in abundance.

40 Removing all the child's genitalia—which was standard practice for eunuchs of the Chinese Imperial court—inevitably increased mortality through infection and damage to the urinary tract, particularly through scarring which often caused fatal blockages. See Piotr

Renault's Bagoas is subsequently sexually abused (the probable fate of many slave children in the ancient world),⁴¹ by his owner's clients before ultimately being taken into Darius' household in order to amuse the Great King in his bed. In turn, the deaths of Bagoas' family supply him with a motive to seek vengeance on Orxines towards the end of the novel, which links up with the fall of the Persian satrap in Curtius Rufus' account. But whereas in Rufus' text, the eunuch's revenge is presented as a result of the decline of Alexander's *regnum*, in that the king's concubine was able to exercise such pernicious influence, in Renault's novel, Bagoas is more like Hermotimus, Xerxes' eunuch in Herodotus (8.104–106), who takes revenge upon the man who had him emasculated. They are both former victims who in turn become *Nemesis*.

Renault's Bagoas tells his story in the first person, and largely in flashback, as the narrator, the older Bagoas, occasionally refers to his current comfortable life at King Ptolemy's court at Alexandria in Egypt, where he is able to make use of Ptolemy's extensive library. By way of a parallel, the early scenes of Stone's film, *Alexander*, also show Ptolemy (Anthony Hopkins) and his research assistant, Cadmus (David Bedella) working in his library complete (for the audience's benefit) with Western style maps sporting Latin and English captions. Renault's Bagoas has become Hellenized; he speaks fluent Greek, and thanks to Alexander's attention to his education, he claims to have "read most of the Greek authors worth mentioning" (p. 178; cf. p. 234), and he refers to Greek literary giants Homer, Herodotus, Euripides, Plato, and Xenophon throughout the course of the narrative. This intermittent dialogue with Greek literature does much to carry the sympathy of a modern audience through a shared heritage.

As noted earlier, it is something of an irony that our perception of Alexander the Great today is shaped by layers of reception starting from the time of

O. Scholz, *Eunuchs and Castrati A Cultural History* (New Jersey, 2001) 136–139; contemporary Chinese sources describe reeds or goose quills being inserted into the victim's urethra in order to encourage the flow of urine.

41 As slaves were property, Greco-Roman society would not have considered sexual exploitation of prostituted slave children as "abuse", unless the child were disfigured or injured to the point of not being serviceable. Potentially any slave was also subject to sexual advances from a master; in general, see Moses Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (New York, 1980). Note that Seneca the Elder speaks of anal intercourse as *puerilis* ('like a boy') see *Contr.* 1.2.10, within the context of a kidnapped woman who is sold into prostitution; although the speaker is sympathetic to her plight, he is emphatic that the woman cannot ever hold a priesthood. We are grateful to our colleague, Dr Jane Bellemore, for the reference.

the Roman Republic, as none of our surviving ancient literary sources on the king, apart from the Attic orators, and none of his portraiture (at least any that can be identified with any certainty) is contemporary.⁴² Since Renault's Bagoas also mentions that Ptolemy prefers now to work on his history of Alexander's reign, and leave ruling Egypt to his son, Ptolemy II Philadelphus, Bagoas is composing his own *memoir*, mirroring the history of his master, late in Ptolemy's regime—presumably around the 280s BC. Renault imagines Ptolemy calling on Bagoas as a fellow eyewitness in order to check details, or for additional information (p. 259). Renault's scenario reflects the consensus of scholarly opinion of her time on the dating of the primary tradition of Alexander histories, when it was felt that Ptolemy—the main source of the extant historian, Arrian, could have only written his history late in life when he had the time to do it. In fact, with the possible exception of Aristobulus, who seems to have written after the Battle of Ipsus in 301 BC (cf. Arrian, *Anab.* 7.18.5), the various composition dates of all the lost, early Alexander histories are unknown and controversial.⁴³

But whereas Ptolemy's history—told by a King, and one of Alexander's most trusted generals—will be the great legacy to posterity, Bagoas' story will be a tribute of love. Bagoas' great rival for Alexander's affections, Hephaestion, is described as Alexander's boyhood friend, and a peer, but Bagoas is deliberately offered to Alexander on the anticipation of the youth becoming Alexander's *eromenos* as the wily Nabarzanes tells the young eunuch: "There is only one real gift for a man like that; something he has been wanting for long time, without being aware of it" (pp. 117–118). Likewise after the Persian boy and the king have become lovers, Bagoas, in an internal monologue, defiantly addresses Hephaestion: "All these years you have made a boy of him but with me he shall be a man" (p. 158). Alexander, once Hephaestion's *eromenos*, but now Bagoas' *erastes*, has attained the final *rite de passage* into full adulthood by being able to cherish, inspire and protect the younger man.

42 On the lost, primary literary traditions on Alexander, Lionel Pearson's *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (London, 1960) is seminal; see also P. Pédech, *Historiens compaignons d'Alexandre* (Paris, 1984); Elizabeth Baynham, "The Ancient Evidence For Alexander the Great" in *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great*, ed. Joseph Roisman (Leiden, 2003), 3–30; Sabine Müller, *Alexander, Makedonien und Persien* (Berlin, 2014), 29–114. On the difficulties of identifying Alexander's portraits, see Stewart, *Faces of Power* 42–52.

43 Baynham, "Ancient Evidence", 9–11; on the date of Cleitarchus, who is thought to be the main source of the so-called "Alexander Vulgate", see more recently, Victor Parker, "Source Critical Reflections on Cleitarchus' Work" in *Alexander and His Successors*, eds. Pat Wheatley and Robert Hannah (California, 2009), 28–55.

Renault wrote long before the ground breaking theoretical studies on ancient sexuality by Kenneth Dover, Michel Foucault, David Halperin, and many others.⁴⁴

At the risk of over simplification, these scholars, especially Foucault and Halperin, highlighted power as the basis of most sexual relationships, particularly in a world dominated by wealthy and well born men. That power was reflected in who the 'dominant' sexual partner was—and who penetrated whom. Eunuchs, particularly in a homosexual relationship, would be seen as catamites. Renault's focus is on the love between the two men; at the same time, her Bagoas is well aware of his lost manhood, his lost high status and his new position as a servant, as well as what he considers is appropriate social conduct—even in relation to his beloved Alexander, whom he consistently refers to as "my lord" even in thought. But Renault also failed to understand that the standards of the Roman elite would also inevitably affect Curtius Rufus' interpretation of Bagoas (as we shall see below). For Rufus, the barbarian eunuch's pernicious influence reflected the corruption of Alexander's power; for Renault, Rufus was just a bad historian, who wasted 'priceless sources'.

As well-known Cambridge scholar and media academic, David Starkey observed of Queen Elizabeth I, that "almost all her historians fall a little in love with Elizabeth",⁴⁵ Renault was more than a little in love with the figure of Alexander the Great, or at least her interpretation of him, largely shaped as it was by the favourable portrayals of Alexander in Arrian and Plutarch, and also by the mostly positive scholarship of the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly the work of Droysen, Bury, Ehrenberg and Tarn.⁴⁶ She refers to Bury outright (p. 473); Droysen's and Tarn's influence pervade the depiction of Alexander as

44 K.J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (London, 1978); M. Foucault, *L'usage des plaisirs* (Paris, 1984); David Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* (London, 1990); the bibliography on ancient sexuality is considerable; other important contributions include F. Buffiere, *Eros adolescent: la pederasty dans la Grèce antique* (Paris, 1980), J.J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire* (London, 1990), James Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love* (London, 2007). See also Skinner's excellent synthesis (above, n. 22).

45 David Starkey, *Elizabeth; Apprenticeship* (London, 2000) x.

46 J.B. Bury, *A History of Greece to the Death of Alexander the Great* (New York, 1900); on the influence of Johan Droysen on shaping 20th century perceptions of Alexander, see Brian Bosworth, "Johan Gustav Droysen, Alexander the Great, and the Creation of the Hellenistic Age" in *Alexander and His Successors*, 1–27; also Pierre Briant, "Alexander and the Persian Empire, between "Decline" and Renovation" in *Alexander the Great, A New History*, 171–188, with earlier bibliography; on Ehrenberg and Alexander's *pothos*; see Victor Ehrenberg, *Alexander and the Greeks* (London, 1938) 52–61, with A.B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*, Vol. 1 (Oxford, 1980), 62.

the great European civilizer, and Ehrenberg can be detected in the theme of Alexander's longing or *pothos* (337, 338). Either Pauly or Berve's monumental prosopographical *compendium* was possibly also useful to Renault, since every reference to Bagoas in our ancient sources features as an episode in either *The Persian Boy* or *Funeral Games*. In addition to her three Alexander novels, Renault also published a work of non-fiction, *The Nature of Alexander* (London, 1975), which, as we noted earlier, Oliver Stone credited with being one of his major influences in his own shaping of Alexander, along with her trilogy.⁴⁷

And because Renault's Bagoas is composing his memoir with the appreciative voice of a lover, the darker episodes of Alexander's reign, like the removal of Philotas and Parmenion, or the murder of Cleitus are presented as apology. Callisthenes, Alexander's official historian and the outspoken critic of the king's attempt to introduce *proskynesis* at his court, is portrayed as a boorish, self-absorbed anti-Persian intellectual, who fatally misinterprets Alexander's attempts to reconcile Macedonians and Persians as *hubris* and who turns the king's own young attendants, the *paides basilikoi* (royal pages) against him. Even Alexander's massacre of a group of Indian mercenaries at the fortress of Massaga in the Swat Valley 326 BC—an atrocity which Plutarch (*Alex.* 59.6) rightly recognized as such—is blamed on the victims themselves, along with Alexander's growing sense of insecurity.⁴⁸

Renault was interested in Alexander's intimate life, and the choice of one of the king's known wives, or lovers of either sex would have offered an obvious voice as a character. If the historical Hephaestion had survived Alexander, then it is possible that Renault would have selected him as the narrator, had she kept the same format as that of *The Persian Boy*. However, she was also deeply interested in Achaemenid Persian culture, and one of her stated aims was to tell the story of Alexander's years of conquest from the Persian point of view.⁴⁹ There is some suggestion in the ancient evidence that Alexander may have had relationships with other young men such as Hector, one of Parmenion's sons, and the obscure Excipinus or Euxenippus, depending on the MS reading (cf. Curt. Ruf. 7.9.19).⁵⁰ But as with Hephaestion, Hector predeceased the King, and we know nothing of Excipinus outside of Rufus. According to Athenaeus (13603 a) Alexander was “maniacally” (*ekmanos*) a lover of boys; but, Plutarch (*Alex.*

47 See above, n. 27.

48 See Elizabeth Baynham, “‘The Abominable Quibble’: Alexander’s Massacre of Indian Mercenaries at Massaga” in *Theatres of Violence*, eds. Philip G. Dwyer and Lyndall Ryan (New York and Oxford, 2012), 27–37.

49 Sweetman, 264.

50 Ogden, “Alexander’s Sex Life”, 211, with n. 58.

22.1–2) also claims that he rejected offers of boys as concubines, including Hagnon of Teos' wish to buy the beautiful Corinthian, Crobylus, as a gift for him. Whatever the king's scruples were over having sex with boys, Alexander was apparently happy at a later point to accept Nabarzanes' gift of Bagoas. Alexander—like his father Philip, and other previous Macedonian kings—may also have had relationships with his bodyguards, or even the *paides basilikoi*—who are certainly attested as forming relationships between themselves—however, the evidence is lacking.⁵¹

Renault's choice of the eunuch servant over one of Alexander's female consorts—who would have been segregated away from the activities of Alexander's court and his staff—is obvious. As we have noted, the ancient evidence on Bagoas suggests an individual who was part of the King's entourage, and who was powerful. Like Ptolemy, such a character was well placed to observe Alexander's administration and court life beyond the battlefield. Yet, given the prejudices against homosexuality in Renault's time, she made a bold and intriguing decision in having a Persian eunuch as the hero of her novel, and his love affair with the Macedonian conqueror as its main theme.

Renault had represented diversity in sexuality in her first novel, *Purposes of Love* (1939), and went on to explore homosexual themes in two later novels, *The Charioteer* (1953), and *The Last of the Wine* (1956), a story which revolves around its Athenian narrator, Alexias, and his *erastes*, Lysis, both students of Socrates, and peers of the young elite, the *jeunesse dorée*, who included Alcibiades,⁵² during the Peloponnesian War. There is also *The Mask of Apollo* which is about Plato's attempt to educate Dionysius the Younger as a philosopher king, and where a young Alexander makes a fleeting appearance.

By the time Renault published *The Persian Boy*, she was living with her partner, Julie Mullard, in South Africa, in a society which openly practised apartheid.⁵³ There was possibly another reason for her choice of Bagoas. Al-

51 Previous Macedonian kings had been murdered by former lovers: Pausanias of Orestis, the assassin of Philip II, Pausanias of Orestis was also a bodyguard; cf. Arist. *Pol.* 131b; Diod. 16. 93–94; Just. 9. 6. 4–7.14; P. Oxy. 1798. See also Ogden, "Alexander's Sex Life", 212, with nn. 60–63. On potential sexual relations between the king and the royal *paides*, see Elizabeth D. Carney, "The Role of the *Basilikoi Paides*" in *Macedonian Legacies*, eds. Timothy Howe and Jeanne Reames (California, 2008), 145–157, especially 149–150.

52 For the term in this context, see A.B. Bosworth, "Thucydides and the Failure in Sicily" in *Greece, Macedon and Persia*, eds. Timothy Howe, E. Edward Garvin, and Graham Wrightson (Oxford, 2015) 31.

53 The latter chapters of Sweetman's biography of Renault examine her life in South Africa and her diligent, although limited, work on behalf of indigenous South African peoples.

though repelled by what she perceived as Tarn's "Victorian priggishness" about Alexander's sexuality,⁵⁴ nonetheless Renault seems to have drawn profound inspiration from Tarn's famous essay on Alexander and the brotherhood of mankind.⁵⁵ As John Atkinson has noted, racial issues, along with other members of society who were marginalized were important concerns for her, even though she was often wary about taking a public stand.⁵⁶

The banquet of reconciliation between Macedonians, Greeks and Persians together with the Susa marriages are high point of the novel, with Bagoas bursting with pride at seeing the aristocracy of his own people offer genuine respect to his own adored, magnanimous and liberal-minded Western lover, as well as seeing Persian brides married to Macedonian husbands. We do not know how the historical Alexander conceived the idea of a joint ruling elite of Macedonians and Persians—if indeed such a "policy of fusion" was ever in his mind at all, obscured as the question has been by the ideologies of both ancient and modern writers.⁵⁷ Renault clearly projects that Alexander not only took the idea from the Persians, and the cultural integration of Persians and Medes, but also imagines Bagoas inspiring the Macedonian king with stories that Cyrus loved a Median boy. As Alexander says to Bagoas at the time of the weddings: "... from loving you, I first learned to love your people" (397). Nor is the respect of other cultures a one-way street. In the novel, Alexander is portrayed as a man who recognizes excellence in all races, not only in his own people, but in Persians like Artabazus; or Oxathres, Darius' brother; the Indian king, Porus; or the Brahman sage, Calanus. Renault's romantic idealism is uplifting, if a little naive. Other perspectives were quite different—for example, in his own time, Calanus was vilified by his caste as a turncoat.⁵⁸

54 Sweetman, 257.

55 W.W. Tarn, "Alexander the Great and the unity of mankind", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 19 (1933); 123–166; cf. *Alexander the Great*, II, 399–449.

56 John Atkinson, "Alexander and the Unity of Mankind: Some Cape Town Perspectives" in *Alexander in Africa*, ed. Philip Bosman (Pretoria, 2014), 170–184.

57 Tarn's essay was challenged by E. Badian, "Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind", *Historia* 7 (1958); 425–444. Subsequent debate among modern scholars on Alexander's kingship as well as policies towards the Iranians is substantial; see the recent insightful analysis of Marek Jan Olbrycht, "Parthia, Bactria and India: the Iranian Policies Of Alexander of Macedonia" in *With Alexander in India and Central Asia*, eds. Claudia Antonetti and Paolo Biagi (Oxford, 2017) 194–209, who includes earlier bibliography, n. 1.

58 See A. Brian Bosworth, "Calanus and the Indian Opposition" in *Alexander der Grosse*, ed. Wolfgang Will (Bonn, 1998), 173–204; also A.B. Bosworth, *Alexander and the East* (Oxford, 1996) 93–97.

As noted earlier, Renault's biggest challenge to her presentation of Bagoas as the plausible and likeable Persian servant, is Curtius Rufus' depiction of him. Renault's own assessment of the Roman historian, expressed both in her author's note at the end of the novel, and also in *The Nature of Alexander*, largely reflects the negative views of Tarn and several scholars of the first half of the twentieth century who saw Rufus as an overblown, sensationalist hack, and a vastly inferior historian to Arrian.⁵⁹ Yet unlike Arrian, Rufus was Renault's—and our—main source of information on Bagoas. Without his work, we would have been left with mere scraps.

As Daniel Ogden has observed, both episodes associated with the eunuch in Rufus are linked with gifts of life and death to two Persian nobles;⁶⁰ in the first Bagoas is presented as *timê* by Nabarzanes, and his intercession on behalf of his master saves his life; in the second, Bagoas is slighted by the satrap Orxines (Orsines in Rufus) and as a result, the eunuch's baleful slanders to Alexander in relation to the vandalism and alleged robbery of Cyrus' tomb (Curt. Ruf. 10.1.33–35), bring about the satrap's execution. Rufus' use of *adsuescere* in Bk 6.5.23 is interesting; the verb usually means something like "attend" or "adhere to", but in this context it has a sinister tone, suggesting an individual who can influence a ruler behind the scenes for the worst.

Furthermore, in Quintus Curtius Rufus, the context of the meeting between Bagoas and Alexander sets the beginning of Alexander's moral deterioration. The king's acceptance of Bagoas is followed by the episode with Thalestris, Queen of the Amazons, who has sought the king out so that he might father a child with her, then Alexander's adoption of Persian dress and acceptance of the royal harem, accompanied by flocks of eunuchs, accustomed to "play the womanly role". In other words, these people are also seen as sexual commodities. Justin (12.3.8–12) traces much the same order of decline, except that there is no mention of Bagoas. Rufus' main concern is to show the moral deterioration in Alexander's character, in that he was being exploited by both a barbarian and a eunuch, and how easily absolute power can be manipulated by a king's favourite—which was not only a literary trope, but a historical reality for many elite Romans during the late Julio Claudian and Flavian periods.

Curtius Rufus elaborates Alexander's decline in Book 10 1.40–42. In his commentary on Book 10, Atkinson interestingly highlights the link with Thaïs who, herself intoxicated, uses her influence on a drunken Alexander to incite the

59 Baynham, *The Unique History of Quintus Curtius*, 5–6.

60 So Ogden, "Alexander's Sex Life", 216.

destruction of Persepolis, back in Book 5.⁶¹ In each episode, Rufus uses the word *scortum*—as far as he was concerned, Thaïs and Bagoas were both whores who were interfering in matters of state, and corrupting the usually sound judgement of Alexander. One problem with kingship is that it can be exploited by low-status and disreputable people—to the point where the bitter but defiant Orxines spits out on his way to his death (10.1.37): “I had heard that women had once ruled in Asia, but this is something new, a *castratus* as king!”

Orxines’ reference to female rule perhaps alludes to the famous Semiramis who had been Queen of Babylon; however, the satrap imparts an additional twist to an old invective. In Greco-Roman literature, Eastern soldiers were sometimes described as women and unwarlike (*imbelles*) and hence not “proper”, soldiers—i.e. *virī*. The racial stereotype features in Livy’s famous counterfactual digression in Book 9.19.10–11 on how Alexander would have been defeated by Rome had he invaded Italy. Curtius Rufus’ audience would have known their Livy.⁶² In Rufus’ narrative, Alexander’s rule is now not only corrupt, but unmanly.⁶³

Arrian’s account (*Anab.* 6.29–30) of the fall of the Persian satrap, Orxines is different from those of Strabo and Rufus, particularly in relation to the satrap’s responsibility for the accusations levelled against him. Arrian lays outright emphasis on the satrap’s guilt, claiming that he had pillaged the royal tombs at Pasargadae directly contradicting Strabo (15.3.7.730), who says that Orxines was not to blame for the robbery. Rufus also sees (10.1.30) the Persian noble as an innocent victim, and he directly attributes Orxines’ execution to the machinations of Bagoas.

Arrian omitted Thaïs’ role in the destruction of Persepolis; and he omitted Bagoas. Probably Ptolemy had also left both individuals out, as neither episode reflected particularly well upon Alexander—particularly if Curtius Rufus’ source (perhaps Cleitarchus) told the truth.⁶⁴ Yet, as with Rufus, the vandalism and apparent robbery of Cyrus’ tomb is an important feature of Arrian’s account (*Anab.* 6.29) However, his emphasis is very different, addressing Alexander’s need to address spreading Persian discontent and the seeds of satrapal secession, or even outright rebellion. Arrian’s account begins with Alexander’s

61 J.E. Atkinson and J.C. Yardley, *Curtius Rufus Histories of Alexander the Great, Book 10* (Oxford, 2010), 102.

62 On Livy’s digression, Ruth Morello, “Livy’s Alexander Digression (9.17–19): Counterfactuals and Apologetics” *Journal of Roman Studies*, 92 (2002), 62–85; S.P. Oakley, *A Commentary on Livy*, vol. III (2005), 184–261, especially 255–256.

63 Ogden, “Alexander’s Sex Life”, 216–217.

64 Atkinson and Yardley, *Commentary on Curtius Book 10*, 93–94.

entry into Pasargadae, Cyrus' territory and the old heartland of the Persian kingdom. The scene suggests growing unrest; Alexander learns that Orxines has taken control of Persia on his own initiative, following the death of the previous satrap, Phrasaortes. Atropates, the loyal satrap of Media, brings the captive Baryaxes, a pretender to the throne of the Medes and Persians. Within this context, Alexander learns both of the desecration of Cyrus' tomb, and allegations made against Orxines: "it was proved that he had rifled temples and royal tombs" (*Anab.* 6.30.2). He was executed on the king's order. Arrian does not give the identity of the Persians who accused Orxines; nor does he say what the "proofs" were. Unlike Rufus, he fails to mention that Orxines was a direct descendant of Cyrus, and therefore, in a dynastic sense, potentially dangerous, and he also does not mention that Orxines' extravagant and flamboyant gifts to Alexander's Companions (so Curt. 10.1.25–26), possibly suggested dangerous aspirations on his part.⁶⁵ Instead Arrian's reticent account of the fall of Orxines recalls his other minimalist narrative (*Anab.* 3.26–27) of the accusation and execution of one of Alexander's most powerful marshals—Philotas. On that occasion, Ptolemy had good reason to keep the story of Philotas' fall as brief as possible, as he benefitted from the general's removal—and along with Craterus and Hephaestion, had probably been instrumental in bringing Philotas down.⁶⁶

What conclusions, then, can we draw about Renault's Bagoas and its significance as a piece of Alexander reception? By choosing to focus on the love between Alexander and one of his male servants, the novel was ahead of its time. Yet despite Renault's own emphatically stated principle that a figure like Alexander should not be judged by modern standards, the novel's innate tendency to idealise and romanticise the Macedonian conqueror may seem out of step now with modern researchers, particularly those scholars who have focused on the human—and very recently—high economic cost of Alexander's wars of conquest.⁶⁷

Richly grounded as it is in the ancient sources, Renault's creative work remains surprisingly effective and powerful in its capacity to bring those past

65 Atkinson and Yardley, *ibid.*, 95.

66 See Bosworth, *Commentary on Arrian*, vol. 1, 359–367; the role that Alexander's marshals played in brining him down was emphasized by Waldemar Heckel, "The Conspiracy Against Philotas", *Phoenix* 31 (1977) 9–21; elaborated by Jeanne Reames, "Crisis and Opportunity: The Philotas Affair ... Again" in *Macedonian Legacies*, 165–182.

67 In particular, Bosworth, *Alexander and the East*; also Frank L. Holt, *The Treasures of Alexander the Great; How One Man's Wealth Shaped the World* (Oxford, 2016).

societies to life—or at least create an image of that society with which a lot of us can identify. Its power is beautifully acknowledged in Eugene Borza's tribute to Renault: "... Miss Renault's book is quite the best work of its kind, and the sober historian looks with envy at the novelist's skill with words and freedom to express fully ideas he only dares hint at."⁶⁸ If we know the Alexander histories, we appreciate the novel's fabric; but, it can move us even if we are unaware of its fountains.

For better or worse in this digital age, most people in our society now to turn to search engines like Google in order to find instant information. Evidence of the influence of Mary Renault's reception of Bagoas can be found in the following Wikipedia citation:

Influential in changing Alexander's attitude toward Persians and therefore in the king's policy decision to try to integrate the conquered peoples fully into his Empire as loyal subjects. He thereby paved the way for the relative success of Alexander's Seleucid successors and greatly enhanced the diffusion of Greek culture to the East.⁶⁹

This is Renault's Bagoas, and her own clarion reworking of the ancient sources now disseminated as 'historical' fact. One wonders what Renault herself would have thought of this 'new Alexander Romance'—only time will tell whether it will prove as long lasting as the old.⁷⁰

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- 68 Eugene N. Borza, *Classical Philology*, 67.4 (1972) 233; cf. Moses Hadas' review of one of Renault's most successful novels, *The King Must Die* (about the myth of Theseus), cited in Sweetman, p. 91.
- 69 Wikipedia: entries are ephemeral and subject to change; the comment on Alexander's Bagoas is current at the time of writing: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eunuch>.
- 70 See Bosworth's observation on Michael Wood's TV series and book, *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great: A Journey from Greece to Asia* (Berkeley, 1997) in A.B. Bosworth and E.J. Baynham (eds.), *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford, 2000), 1.

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Alexander's Image in German, Anglo-American and French Scholarship from the Aftermath of World War I to the Cold War*

Reinhold Bichler

General Introduction

The following study takes its point of departure as the eve of World War I. By that time, scholarly research into Alexander had already yielded a vast abundance of relevant literature. Its bases were laid as early as the Age of Enlightenment, when scholarly interest in Alexander gained amazing dimensions and greater emphasis was placed on a critical and systematic approach to the ancient sources. The study of the great conqueror was increasingly used to reflect current events and developments. The conflicts with the Ottoman Empire, the campaigns of Charles XII of Sweden, the opening up of new sea and trade routes to India, Napoleon's military successes and defeats, the Greek War of Independence: all this was judged in the light of Alexander's activities. Whereas the notoriously contentious issue of his moral qualities became less important, greater focus was given to the assessment of the long-term impacts which his unique campaign had left. Alongside the teleological view of Alexander's role as the one who paved the way for a Christian Occident, the modern issue of the geopolitical importance of Alexander's campaigns and their effects on trade and transport, science and the arts emerged. Alexander was widely given credit in that respect even if his exercise of rule was not always approved of.¹ Additionally, he earned admiration for his military genius, which across all developments in warfare and war technology has endured to this day.

During the heyday of late 19th-century colonization activities, a largely positive image of the great conqueror dominated the field. He had opened up new spaces, and in the wake of his venture, the dynamic Greek culture had

* Translated into English by Franz Pramhaas.

1 The reception of Alexander within the Age of Enlightenment is analysed in a comprehensive study by Pierre Briant, *Alexandre des Lumières: Fragments d'histoire européenne* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012).

split the petrified traditions of a monolithic Orient. As regards the assessment of the consequences of Alexander's campaign, however, a fundamental problem continued to exist. In painting the portrait of a conqueror that was increasingly 'Orientalized' and turned into a despot, Alexander history had already created the prerequisite for the shadow of future corruption that was cast over the victorious hero during the process of reception. Their advance into a world fossilized by passivity and sluggish luxury thus exerted a corrosive influence on the ethnic/cultural identity of the conquerors. In the context of growing nationalism—despite great admiration for Alexander's heroic achievements—the dangerous consequences of his campaign were therefore seen in a negative light. Alexander was criticized to the effect that he had jeopardized the—anachronistically perceived as such—national identity of the Greeks and, respectively, the Macedonians. The resulting consequences for a picture of Alexander the Great posed a major challenge, particularly to German historical studies, which became progressively nationalist-oriented.

A German Dilemma: The Idealization of the Conqueror and the Endangerment of Greek and Macedonian National Identity

In his *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, whose revised edition of 1877/78 was increasingly well received, Johann Gustav Droysen had regretted that in the course of the struggle for Alexander's heritage the opportunity to build a strong Greek-Macedonian national state had been missed in the same way as the firm establishment of an international system of modern monarchies had failed. This aspect, however, was subordinated to Droysen's historico-philosophical conception. Inspired by Hegel, Droysen presented a general outline of universal progress which beyond all phases of decline led to the greater good of mankind. Alexander is viewed here as a ground-breaker for the spread of Christianity and Islam (!).²

During the war, in 1917, an updated version of the second edition of Droysen's *Geschichte Alexanders des Großen* was published, which in 1877 had formed the first volume of his *Geschichte des Hellenismus*. The popular Swedish geographer and explorer Sven Hedin, a militant admirer of Germany, prefaced it. He

2 For Droysen and his work on Hellenism cf. Reinhold Bichler, *Hellenismus: Geschichte und Problematik eines Epochenbegriffs* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), esp. 55–109; Stefan Rebenich und Hans-Ulrich Wiemer, *Johann Gustav Droysen: Philologie und Historie, Politik und Philosophie: Tagung auf Schloss Rauischholzhausen bei Gießen, 11–13. Juli 2008* (Frankfurt, und New York: Campus Verlag, 2012).

expressed his conviction that the king of the Macedonians would find more admirers in "Hindenburg's fatherland, which was fighting against almost the rest of the world", than ever before.³ The keen 'interest in the history of war' which Alexander's campaigns aroused was also highlighted by the young private lecturer Arthur Rosenberg in his factual introduction (Rosenberg then worked for the Presseamt, the public relations office of the army, in Berlin and had not yet turned towards Marxism). He had doubts as to whether Alexander's policy was in line with the Greek-Macedonian people, since successful 'Hellenization' of the empire, which had been won at a stroke, was unrealistic.⁴

In expressing his doubts, Rosenberg was following in the best tradition. In a speech, held in Potsdam in 1915, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, a highly renowned representative of classical philology, had already expressed words of warning about the temptation and risks involved in the quest for global supremacy. Thanks to Alexander, the Macedonians and Greeks had apparently become a "Herrenvolk" that was entitled to dominate the world. History, however, had taught us that the Orient could not be 'Europeanized'. Such an undertaking was contrary to the laws of nature, just as was the "Orientalization of Europe".⁵ The following year, Walter Otto, a historian of antiquity then lecturing at Marburg, had put this critical point in the assessment of the otherwise admired king of the Macedonians in more drastic words. Alexander's campaign had doubtlessly "sealed" the political and cultural domination of the West over the East. His plans for world domination, however, had been an absurdity ("Unding") as they had been intended to "denationalize" the world.⁶

During the time of the Weimar Republic, admiration for Alexander's superhuman strength and capabilities seems to have actually increased.⁷ But at the same time, there was also a growing tension between the fascination exerted by

3 Johann Gustav Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders des Großen: Mit einem Vorwort von Sven Hedin und einer Einleitung von Dr. Arthur Rosenberg* (Berlin: Decker's Verlag, 1917), xii.

4 Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders des Großen*, xxv–xxvi. On Hedin's and Rosenberg's activities at that time cf. Mario Keßler, *Arthur Rosenberg: Ein Historiker im Zeitalter der Katastrophen (1898–1943)* (Köln, Weimar, und Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2003), esp. 36–38.

5 Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "Orient und Okzident (Rede vom 13. April 1915)", in *Reden aus der Kriegszeit*, von Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (Berlin: Weidmann Verlag, 1915), esp. 232, 250.

6 Walter Otto, *Alexander der Große: Ein Kriegsvortrag*. Marburger Akademische Reden 34 (Marburg: N.G. Elwert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1916), esp. 9, 31.

7 For the portrayal of Alexander at the time of World War I and the Weimar Republic cf. Alexander Demandt, "Politische Aspekte im Alexanderbild der Neuzeit: Ein Beitrag zur historischen Methodenkritik", *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 54 (1972): esp. 336–340. Demandt assumes the widespread cult of the genius to be a "compensation for the trauma of Versailles".

his victorious advance into the interior of Asia and the concerns that the venture had triggered a process of 'denationalization' and 'cosmopolitanization'. This is how, for instance, Julius Kaerst put it.⁸ That scholar, who lectured in Würzburg, had already published comprehensive works on Alexander and Hellenism before the outbreak of the war. He underlined the 'personal principle' of Alexander's reign, which outweighed its inherent 'oriental element'. And he assumed the 'essence' of Hellenism to lie in the transformation of the national unity of Hellenes into a purely cultural one.⁹ In 1922, Kaerst published a portrait of Alexander that was aimed at a wider audience. After highlighting his splendid accomplishments, he deplored that in antiquity—not only in Alexander's case—initial steps towards forming national entities had been 'devoured' by the aspiration to form global dominions. The current efforts at bringing about the "brotherhood of peoples" ("Völkerverbrüderung") and the establishing of international law were, however, more utopian than the "desire for unification" in antiquity.¹⁰ Theodor Birt, historian of antiquity at the university of Marburg and man of letters, was even more outspoken in this direction. In a 1925, pathos-laden monograph there was no lack of admiration for his hero; but, the ambivalence of Alexander's legacy was expressed in drastic words. Alexander may have paved the way for the spread of Christianity but at the same time had set in motion a process resulting in a "victory of non-Greek blood within Greek civilisation". The first "complete victory" of cosmopolitanism brought about by Alexander, with its programme of levelling peoples and cultures ("völkernivellierendes Programm"), was not suitable as a role model for the present. Birt also strongly criticized the uselessness of the League of Nations.¹¹

For all the ambivalence in the assessment of the long-term consequences of his activities, any voicing of doubts as to Alexander's genius and greatness as military commander had little chance of being appreciated by academic colleagues. Therefore Karl Julius Beloch, too, was not rewarded with success in his role as iconoclast. In the revised version of his comprehensive, and in many

8 Julius Kaerst, "Alexander der Große", in *Meister der Politik: Eine weltgeschichtliche Reihe von Bildnissen: Band I*, hrsg. Erich Marcks und Karl Alexander von Müller (Stuttgart, und Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1922), 58.

9 Julius Kaerst, *Geschichte des hellenistischen Zeitalters: Band 1: Die Grundlegung des Hellenismus* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1901), esp. 383; Julius Kaerst, *Geschichte des hellenistischen Zeitalters: Band 11: Das Wesen des Hellenismus* (Leipzig, und Berlin: B.G. Teubner, 1909), esp. 290.

10 Kaerst, "Alexander der Große", esp. 59–60 with fn. 1.

11 Theodor Birt, *Alexander der Große und das Weltgriechentum bis zum Erscheinen Jesu* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1925), esp. 239, 258, 417–418.

ways innovative, *Griechische Geschichte*, the great outsider, whose academic career was pursued mostly in Italy, once again set out the reasons why he did not consider Alexander a great statesman, nor even a great general. He attributed his undeniable successes to Philip and Parmenion but failed to find understanding.¹²

A great deal of recognition and success, however, was bestowed on the biography with which the renowned historian of antiquity and papyrologist Ulrich Wilcken praised Alexander's activities. Published in 1931, the year of Wilcken's retirement from professorship in Berlin, his work was used and appreciated over a long period. The fact that a translation (by G.C. Richards) appeared in London as early as 1932 illustrates its high international standing. Wilcken stressed Alexander's military and organizational genius. Alexander's true greatness, however, showed itself in the economic and cultural development which he effected, following his guiding principle ("Leitgedanke") of spreading Greek culture throughout the Orient.¹³ In Wilcken's view, the subsequent response of the Orient to Hellenism should not diminish Alexander's merits. Yet, he saw it as an analogy to the present, which again was experiencing 'an awakening of the Orient and a reaction against Europeans'. Race mixture as a result of Alexander's policy hardly provided grounds for criticism either. Alexander had only planned ethnic fusion with the Iranians but not with other peoples, such as Egyptians and Semites.¹⁴ In a late study, published in 1937, Wilcken clarified his position: whatever judgement might be passed on Alexander's 'racial policy', it was clear that he had regarded the mingling of different peoples ("Rassenmischung der Völker") as the best means of ensuring harmony and friendship in the world.¹⁵

12 Karl Julius Beloch, "Alexander und Parmenion", in *Griechische Geschichte IV/2: Die griechische Weltherrschaft*, von Karl Julius Beloch. 2. Auflage (Berlin, und Leipzig: De Gruyter, 1927), 290–306.

13 Ulrich Wilcken, *Alexander der Große* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1931), esp. 246–305.

14 Wilcken, *Alexander der Große*, esp. 209, 296–297.

15 Ulrich Wilcken, "Die letzten Pläne Alexanders des Großen", *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Phil.-hist. Klasse* 24 (1937): esp. 203.

The Evaluation of Alexander's 'Policy of Fusion' in Historical Research during the NS-Period

By that time the 'race issue' had long gained fateful significance, which was also noticeable in the evaluation of Alexander. Opinions differed sharply.¹⁶ The most determined effort to keep Alexander's image free from the blemish of a misguided 'racial-biological' policy was made by Helmut Berve, a prominent representative of a new generation of young researchers who had started their careers after the end of World War I. In 1926, he presented *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage*, a two-volume standard work which received international acclaim. Even if the characterization of individual figures is tainted by the zeitgeist, the work, marked by meticulous source material research, has retained its extraordinary usefulness as a research tool.¹⁷ The following year, the beginning of his professorship in Leipzig, Berve published an emphatically written biographical sketch on Alexander in which he praised his policy of fusion. Alexander had endeavoured to merge the Macedonian-Hellenic and Iranian races into one unity and had pursued this objective with great resolve ("mit der Moral eines Züchters"). This "fusion of races" was to form the foundations of the future empire, whereas trade was to be promoted as a means of consolidating unity ("bester Diener der Weltverschmelzung").¹⁸ In a 1938 paper, Berve sought to demonstrate at all costs, straining the sources, that purity of races had been of concern to Alexander, who had taken utmost care to ensure that his soldiers got involved only with members of the "vigorous Iranian ethnicity", but not, for instance, with any "Asian elements".¹⁹

A broader audience became familiar with Berve's portrayal of Alexander in his much read *Griechische Geschichte* of 1931/33. It is the picture of a hero who in the last years of his life grew to "almost superhuman greatness" and dedicated himself to his "idea of fusion" with almost religious fervour ("fast

16 For more details on the following subject see Demandt, "Politische Aspekte im Alexanderbild der Neuzeit", esp. 341–357; Reinhold Bichler, "Alexander der Große und das NS-Geschichtsbild", in *Antike und Altertumswissenschaft in der Zeit von Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus: Kolloquium Zürich 14.–17. Oktober 1998*, hrsg. Beat Näf (Mandelbachtal, und Cambridge: Edition Cicero, 2001), 345–378; Pierre Briant, *Alexandre: Exégèse des lieux communs* (Paris: Gallimard, 2016), esp. 454–470.

17 Helmut Berve, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage: Band 1: Darstellung; Band 11: Prosopographie* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1926).

18 Helmut Berve, "Alexander: Versuch einer Skizze seiner Entwicklung", *Die Antike: Zeitschrift für Kunst und Kultur des Klassischen Altertums* 3 (1927): 128–145.

19 Helmut Berve, "Die Verschmelzungspolitik Alexanders des Großen", *Klio* 31 (1938): esp. 159.

religiöser Inbrunst"). Berve talks about a "fantastic fusion of blood between races" ("phantastische Blutsverbindung der Rassen") but without criticizing the "ruler of the world" for it.²⁰ Another work that aimed at a broader audience was a new edition of Droysen's *Geschichte Alexanders des Großen* (1931), in its initial version of 1833. Berve wrote an emphatically-worded introduction for it. He stressed that Droysen had been the first to understand Alexander's "world-historic importance" and established a novel "historical" relationship between "modern intellectual life" and Greek civilisation ("Griechentum"). Berve felt obliged, though, to excuse Droysen's close, amicable relationship with Jewish composer Felix Mendelssohn: his "markedly German, stolid nature" ("kerndeutsche, schwerblütige Art") had immunized him from the risks related to this—from today's perspective—strange company.²¹ Droysen's *Alexander*, including Berve's introductory words, was not only reprinted in several editions; as *Frontbuchhandelsausgabe für die Wehrmacht* it was also found suitable for wartime deployment.

A completely different view in assessing Alexander's racial policy was taken by Fritz Schachermeyr during the NS-period. As early as 1933, holding a professorship at Jena, he published a programmatic essay, in which he insisted on the critical distinction of the classical heritage into its "nordic" and its "racially foreign" components. He presented the epoch of Hellenism as a cautionary example of a disastrous development that had resulted in the "complete dissolution" of and the "degeneration of the Nordic element" ("Entnordung") in Greek ethnicity.²² Schachermeyr put forward his racial views in monstrous terminology, which then also determined the portrait of Alexander published in the 1944 monograph *Indogermanen und Orient*. The grotesque picture which the author draws of the disastrous consequences that Alexander's idea of a global empire would have in racial-biological terms will be dealt with later on.

Schachermeyr and Berve were amongst those scholars who strongly advocated a National Socialist perspective in looking at history.²³ At the same time, they represented the most divergent positions in assessing Alexander in the

20 Helmut Berve, *Griechische Geschichte: Zweite Hälfte: Von Perikles bis zur politischen Auflösung* (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 1933), esp. 192–193, 199–200.

21 Helmut Berve, "Einführung", in *Johann Gustav Droysen: Geschichte Alexanders des Großen*, hrsg. Helmut Berve. Neudruck der Urausgabe: 3. Auflage (1931) (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1943), vii, xii, xxi.

22 Fritz Schachermeyr, "Die Aufgaben der Alten Geschichte im Rahmen der nordischen Weltgeschichte", *Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* 23 (1933): esp. 599.

23 On Berve esp. cf. Stefan Rebenich, "Alte Geschichte in Demokratie und Diktatur: Der Fall Helmut Berve", *Chiron* 31 (2001): 457–496; on Schachermeyr see Martina Pesditschek,

context of "racial policy". In this respect, there was no unanimous opinion among historians of antiquity. On the whole, however, the predominant tendency was to view Alexander in a positive light also in this regard. A few examples may illustrate this. It is at first useful to recall the judgements by Wilcken (1937) and Berve (1927 and 1938) cited above. The former emphasized that the "fusion of races" Alexander had aimed at was to facilitate harmony between peoples and cultures, whereas the latter accentuated Alexander's consideration for the purity of the races mixed. In any case, Alexander's greatness was not to be called into question, no matter whether his "racial policy" was regarded as a minor aspect, as Wilcken did, or was put centre-stage, as Berve did.

It is interesting to take a comparative look at the portrait of Alexander which Victor Ehrenberg provided in a collection of studies on the topic of 'East and West'. The author had been lecturing at the German university in Prague and was later compelled to immigrate to England. He largely agreed with his colleagues in Germany on the basic patterns of the historical process pursued by Alexander. The Macedonian was in the vanguard of a youthfully vigorous "Nordic" power and initially brought a wave of "Hellenic activity" into the world of the Orient. Later, however, when the "strength of Greek spirit" diminished, the Orient grew stronger beneath the superficial "varnish of its Hellenization". But Ehrenberg strongly opposed the idea that Alexander's "policy of fusion" had been driven by an "instinctive" ("instinkthaften") realization of the racial kinship between the Indo-Germanic peoples in East and West (as Berve saw things). It rather stemmed from Alexander's understanding of his prominent royal position. All subjects, be it Macedonians, Hellenes or Orientals, were to be equal before him. In Ehrenberg's opinion, Alexander championed a notion of cosmopolitanism which no longer asked for nationality or ethnicity.²⁴ Before Ehrenberg's emigration, a translated collection of studies on *Alexander and the Greeks* had come out in Oxford. In it, even more emphasis was placed on the personal aspect of Alexander's rule. Opposing Kaerst and Wilcken, Ehrenberg pointed out that Alexander had not been seeking a cultural unity in the sense of a "unity of Hellenic civilisation". "Unity for him was enclosed in his own person; and the blending and fusing of men and peoples were no items of a program

Barbar, Kreter, Arier: Leben und Werk des Althistorikers Fritz Schachermeyr: 2 Bände (Saarbrücken: Südwestdeutscher Verlag für Hochschulschriften, 2009).

24 Victor Ehrenberg, "Alexander der Große", in *Ost und West: Studien zur geschichtlichen Problematik der Antike*, von Victor Ehrenberg. Schriften der Philosophischen Fakultät der Deutschen Universität in Prag 15 (Brünn et al.: Verlag Rohrer, 1935), esp. 145, 163, 175.

of civilization".²⁵ After his immigration to England, and under the impression of the war, Ehrenberg acknowledged Alexander's cosmopolitanism in essays—they will be dealt with below—as a legacy of world-historical significance.

A completely different view was taken by Walter Kolbe, then teaching in Freiburg. In a treatise on *Alexanders Weltreichspolitik*, published in 1936, he claimed that Alexander, in his endeavour to establish a "global state", had failed in his task as statesman, namely the fostering of his own people's ethnic identity. After all, he had sought to speed up and deepen the process of reconciliation between the peoples ("Völkerversöhnung") by mixing their blood. This cosmopolitan conception, however, had deprived nations and races of their individual autonomy ("Eigenberechtigung"). What that led to could be seen in regard to the French, who had no qualms about "giving full citizenship to the coloured members of their empire".²⁶

The considerable differences in the assessment of the long-term implications of Alexander's conquests are also reflected in a number of works issued during the war. In 1939, Fritz Taeger, historian of antiquity at Marburg and a former fellow student of Ehrenberg, released a comprehensive history of antiquity, which subsequently enjoyed several reprints. In it, Alexander is expressly praised as a statesman too. Taeger was convinced that Alexander wanted to establish an empire that encompassed the whole of the *oikumene*. The Macedonians, Greeks, Persians and the other Iranians, as the "master races" ("Herrenvölker") were to rule it; peace, prosperity and justice were to prevail. He also came to Alexander's defence against any kind of schoolmasterly criticism: "...jede große Gestalt ist allein dem Gesetz ihres Dämons unterworfen". Only from the vantage point of the present could we realize that the "magnificent idea of racial fusion" was an error. Greek civilisation had spread beyond normal dimensions. This had led to "foreign domination by foreign blood and foreign spiritual powers" and eventually ended in a disastrous defeat of Hellenism.²⁷

In his contribution to the re-edited *Propyläen-Weltgeschichte* of 1940, Hans Erich Stier, who lectured at Münster, avoided judging Alexander from a racial-biological view. He, too, appreciated the statesman, not only the conqueror. His judgement as to the long-term cultural impacts after Alexander's death,

25 Victor Ehrenberg, *Alexander and the Greeks*, trans. Ruth Fraenkel von Velsen (Oxford: Blackwell, 1938), esp. 108–109.

26 Walther Kolbe, *Die Weltreichsidee Alexanders des Großen: Vortrag gehalten bei der Jahresversammlung der Freiburger Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft am 23. November 1935* (Freiburg i.Br.: Verlagshaus Speyer, 1936), esp. 19–21.

27 Fritz Taeger, *Das Altertum: Geschichte und Gestalt: 2 Bände* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1939), Band 1: esp. 413–414, 426.

however, remained ambivalent. Alexander had provided the Greeks with new "lebensraum", and their vigour had enabled them to culturally penetrate the Orient, inspire science and economy, thereby ultimately creating a prerequisite for the spread of Christianity. Yet, their then "modern" culture, with its distinctly rational orientation, had no longer been religiously stable. Thus, Hellenistic culture had gradually turned into a merely superficial civilisation.²⁸

Contrary to Stier, Ernst Kornemann, who had lectured at Breslau until he retired, had *a priori* portrayed Greek civilisation in the time of Alexander in negative terms. On the other hand, he expressed his highest opinion of the Macedonians in a 1943 study. Whereas the Greeks had long been decadent, the Macedonians, who were also part of "our race", were seen as a strong and youthful people. Since Alexander had realized that in the long run the Orient could not be held in check by the Macedonians alone, his concept of ethnic intermingling had been intended to create a Macedonian-Persian state. So far, so good. The fatal mistake had been made after Alexander's death, when this concept of fusion had also involved Greek civilisation, which had already degenerated into "Levantinism" ("das zum Levantinismus entartete Griechentum"). This had caused the Macedonians, as a people, to be finally merged into the "denationalized term of 'Hellenes'".²⁹

Kornemann did not wish to charge his admired hero with this development. Fritz Schachermeyr, by contrast, who then lectured in Graz, showed less reluctance in this regard and in his above-mentioned *Indogermanen und Orient* (1944) and accused him of having committed "biological sacrilege". He found a specific terminology for his presentation. Alexander's undoubtedly fascinating appeal is described as a symbiosis of ideology and individual demonic nature. His "excessive idea" ("Übersteigerung") of a global empire with its "cultural tolerance", which Schachermeyr ascribed to Alexander's "nordic nature", and the resulting policy of ethnic intermingling had had disastrous effects. The increasing hybridization between Iranians and Asians ("asiatische Rasseneinkreuzung") had put the Macedonians, who had mingled with the former, at risk of "bastardization". In this way, Alexander had sacrificed his own people for *raison d'état* ("Staatsräson des Weltreiches"). If his plans for the relocation of the peoples had been implemented, the "cultural nation" of the

28 Hans Erich Stier, "Geschichte Griechenlands und des Hellenismus", in *Die Neue Propyläen-Weltgeschichte: Band 1*, hrsg. Willy Andreas (Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag, 1940), esp. 264.

29 Ernst Kornemann, "Alexander und seine Makedonen", in *Gestalten und Reiche: Essays zur Alten Geschichte*, von Ernst Kornemann (Wiesbaden: Dieterich, 1943), esp. 48, 56–57.

Greeks, too, would have been drawn into a “chaos of blood”. In the end, this policy would have led to a “Levantization of the Oikumene”.³⁰

This 1944 portrayal of the impact Alexander’s policy had had, including the grotesque terminology it was painted in, constitutes a singular phenomenon. Different but notable words of criticism of Alexander’s policy came from the renowned papyrologist and economic historian Friedrich Oertel in a lecture series (*Kriegsvorträge*) at Bonn in 1943. The “boundlessness” of the Asian continent had led to Alexander’s undoing. Pursuing his policy of racial fusion, he had more and more been drawn into the “tentacles of the Orient”. Subsequently, the “dam” against the Orient had been torn down, resulting in a decisive weakening of the ‘ethnic substance’ in Greek civilisation. Up to there, Oertel was thinking along traditional lines. What is striking, however, is his major criticism of Alexander’s leadership. Oertel initially recognizes his military genius, but then he addresses his pathological fits of rage and a whole series of “conspiracies, executions, judicial murders and assassinations”.³¹ In historical research, this gloomy picture is variously interpreted as latent criticism of the ‘Führer’.³²

German-Language Historiography in the Post-War Years: Continuity or Break in the Portrayal of Alexander?

The two portrayals critical of Alexander at the end of the previous considerations could lead to wrong conclusions. In general, an idealizing tendency prevailed in the assessment of Alexander’s activities during the period from the Wilhelmine era to the end of World War II. Admiration for his almost superhuman greatness led to the situation that long-term impacts of his campaigns that were evaluated positively were frequently attributed to him. Negatively assessed consequences, on the other hand, were not held against him wherever possible. The appraisal of Alexander’s idea of a global empire and the resulting cosmopolitanism played a key role in this context. So did the question as to what extent his policy of fusion endangered national unity and the purity of Macedonian and Greek ethnicity and race. The stance of the individual authors varied considerably, depending on proximity or distance to the

30 Fritz Schachermeyr, *Indogermanen und Orient: Ihre kulturelle und machtpolitische Auseinandersetzung im Altertum* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1944), esp. 240–243.

31 Friedrich Oertel, *Alexander der Große. Kriegsvorträge der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität* 107 (Bonn: Scheur, 1943), esp. 17–19.

32 Cf., for example, Demandt, “Politische Aspekte im Alexanderbild der Neuzeit”, 352–353.

prevailing zeitgeist. The basic methodological problem of anachronistic retro-projection seems to have been largely banished from their minds.

One might perhaps have expected that after 1945 a change of attitude took place in this respect. But this happened only to a very limited extent. The prevalent portraits of Alexander showed a high degree of continuity. This particularly applies to biographical sketches and relevant parts in comprehensive surveys. First, reference can be made to Berve's *Griechische Geschichte* and Fritz Taeger's *Altertum*. Both works, which were dealt with above, saw new editions with only some minor retouching here and there to the original texts. The new edition of Berve's work appeared in 1950/51. At the time, the author was lecturing as "außerplanmäßiger Professor" (irregular lecturer) in Munich, having regained the *venia docendi*, which he had lost in 1945. Even the papers in which Berve had addressed the issue of Alexander's racial policy in his specific manner were reprinted unchanged in collected editions. In particular, the impact of his *Griechische Geschichte*, also published in a 1959/60 paperback edition, should not be underestimated in imparting basic ideas about Alexander's personality and his activities. The same applies to Taeger's *Altertum*, which also enjoyed considerable dissemination for some time.

The picture of Alexander outlined above, as it was conveyed in these two comprehensive works, was followed by portrayals of a similar kind. Deep admiration can also be discerned in the portrait of the great Macedonian which classical philologist Max Pohlenz produced for the volume *Gestalten aus Hellas* (1950). Opposing the "materialist concept of history", he underlined Alexander's "superhuman greatness" and also praised his "grandiose" decision to create a new race. This race was to unite the best qualities of the two 'master races' of Europe and Asia in its genetic material ("Erbmasse") and bind the new empire together. As its ruler, Alexander wanted to bring "peace and well-being" to humankind.³³ In his two-volume edition of *Weltgeschichte Asiens im griechischen Zeitalter*, Franz Altheim had previously idealized Alexander's conception of a global empire in a different way. The author, still lecturing then at Halle before changing to the Freie Universität in West Berlin in 1950, viewed the process in which the "nomads of the East" had buried Hellenistic culture in exactly that East as a cautionary example for the present.³⁴ As to Alexander, the author had nothing but profound admiration for him. His policy of

33 Max Pohlenz, "Alexander der Große", in *Gestalten aus Hellas*, von Max Pohlenz (München: Bruckmann Verlag, 1950), esp. 493, 496–498.

34 Franz Altheim, *Weltgeschichte Asiens im griechischen Zeitalter: Band 11* (Halle (Saale): Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1948), esp. 2–9.

fusion had primarily been targeted at the Eastern Iranian ethnicity and its “war-like, unjaded strength” (“kriegerisch-unverbrauchte Kraft”). What fascinated the author above all was Alexander’s conception of a global empire. From the very outset of the campaign, he had regarded himself as “ruler of the world”. Altheim also had no doubts as to whether Alexander had actually intended to sail the ocean around Libya (= Africa) in order to establish the empire he had dreamed of. Altheim called these plans “grand and fateful” (“großartig und schicksalhaft”).³⁵

Even before the end of the war, Ernst Kornemann, who died in 1946, had also written a *Weltgeschichte des Mittelmeerraums* in two volumes. They were published posthumously by Hermann Bengtson in Munich and saw an unrevised edition in 1967. Quite in contrast to his essay discussed above on *Alexander und seine Makedonen*, Kornemann strikes a different note: He presents the formerly vilified Hellenes, together with the Persians, as the creators of Europe.³⁶ Partnering with each other, Iranism and Hellenism had been the driving forces behind the development of world history: the latter as a cultural power, the former because of its religious impact, which “across late Judaism” (“über das späte Judentum hinweg”) encompassed Christianity. Opposing W.W. Tarn, it was important for Kornemann to note that the planned creation of a “mixed race” for the new Macedonian-Persian state had nothing to do with “general world brotherhood”.³⁷ Hans Erich Stier, too, had been working on a large historical study during the war, which was published in the immediate post-war period under the title of *Grundlagen und Sinn der griechischen Geschichte*. His reflections on Alexander and Hellenism largely follow the same patterns as his article in the *Propyläen-Weltgeschichte* mentioned above. Alexander is depicted as “heroic king”. Stier acknowledges his genius and his “cosmopolitan spirit” and calls his wish to give the world a new face “one of the most beautiful legacies of Hellenic-European spirit”. Yet, his heritage had been increasingly threatened by the “deadly grip” of the Orient and would have fallen victim to it unless Christianity and Germanic peoples had saved the foundations of the Occident.³⁸

35 Franz Altheim, *Weltgeschichte Asiens im griechischen Zeitalter: Band 1* (Halle (Saale): Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1947), esp. 201–213.

36 Ernst Kornemann, *Weltgeschichte des Mittelmeer-Raumes: Von Philipp II. von Makedonien bis Muhammed: Band 1: Bis zur Schlacht bei Actium (31 v. Chr.)*, hrsg. Hermann Bengtson (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1948), 34–47.

37 Kornemann, *Weltgeschichte des Mittelmeer-Raumes*, esp. 58–59, 143.

38 Hans Erich Stier, *Grundlagen und Sinn der griechischen Geschichte* (Stuttgart: Cotta Verlag, 1945), esp. 294, 356. Later on, the author pushed Alexander’s idealization even further by

The great plans attributed to Alexander of a fusion of peoples in a global empire continued to exercise almost unbroken fascination. Equally persistent were the more or less racially charged concerns over the dangers which the victoriously advancing Macedonians and Greeks were exposed to by the pernicious influences of the Orient. The glamorous portrait of the heroized conqueror, however, was not to be muddled by these concerns. So Fritz Schachermeyr, the notoriously harsh critic of Alexander's idea of racial fusion, faced a major challenge when working on an extensive monograph on Alexander after the war. Having lost his professorship at Graz University in 1945, the author had retired, but was appointed professor in Vienna in 1952. His work was issued with the significant title *Alexander der Große. Ingenium und Macht* in 1949. It draws on an extensive examination of sources but appears very idiosyncratic due to its pathos-packed language. Schachermeyr depicts his hero as an "apocalyptic figure" who pursued a fantastic vision with spine-chilling violence: the idea of a world state as a "welfare state" in which autonomous political powers and wars no longer existed because all power was concentrated in the person of its creator, of a real Titan.³⁹ The praise of cosmopolitanism has a hollow ring to it, though, when Schachermeyr has to admit in surprise that Alexander had evidently intended to incorporate "Semite civilisation" ("Semitentum") as an integrative factor into the "planning of his empire". Accordingly, the conclusion proves to be contradictory: What we should preserve from Alexander's idea is "all-embracing friendship and love"; at the same time, however, we should hope that "fate" may kindly spare the world a new "Titan of triumphant violence".⁴⁰

Schachermeyr could hardly be found a convincing and credible authority for a legitimate critique of power. "Whoever carries Hitler within themselves to the extent that they condemn and reject young [...] Alexander for his sake,

presenting him as a potential pacifier of the world; cf. Hans Erich Stier, *Welteroberung und Weltfriede im Wirken Alexanders des Großen*. Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften: Vorträge Geisteswissenschaften 187 (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1973).

39 Schachermeyr, *Indogermanen und Orient*, esp. 8, 489–490.

40 Fritz Schachermeyr, *Alexander der Große: Ingenium und Macht* (Graz et al.: Pustet Verlag, 1949), esp. 453, 496. In another large monograph of 1973, the author once more polished up his dazzling portrait of Alexander, describing the "Alldämonie" emanating from the king's personality in words brimming with pathos; cf. Fritz Schachermeyr, *Alexander der Große: Das Problem seiner Persönlichkeit und seines Wirkens*. Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Phil.-hist. Klasse 285 (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1973), esp. 582. For the reactions to both monographs on Alexander see Pesditschek, *Leben und Werk des Althistorikers Fritz Schachermeyr*, esp. 1386–394, 11574–582, cf. also 1356–371.

steps out of history and violates the distance that befits the historian.” With these pointed words, Alexander Schenk von Stauffenberg reacted to Schachermeyr’s work in a 1952/53 study on *Recht und Macht in der Geschichte am Beispiel Alexanders des Großen* (1953). The brother of the well-known resistance fighter lectured in Munich and was himself an admirer of the great Macedonian. He considered Schachermeyr’s implicit comparison with Hitler completely unjustified. In regard to Alexander, one might wonder whether ever “throughout history a ruler whose intention it had been to change and shape the world had pursued his endeavour at lower costs in lives [...]”.⁴¹

It is noteworthy that in the 1950’s German-language scholarship produced a number of works in which a different path towards a more rational-critical judgement of Alexander was taken. Hermann Strasburger read Alexander’s fatal march through the Gedrosian Desert as a timeless memorial for all the victims of wars of conquest.⁴² At the same time, Alfred Heuß, a former student of Helmut Berve, stressed the need for realizing the political-philosophical and symbolic meaning which the various ancient portrayals of Alexander held.⁴³ In Switzerland, Gerald Walser called for abandoning the hero-worshipping depiction of Alexander in the tradition of Droysen.⁴⁴ And in Austria, Franz Hampl, like Heuß a former student of Helmut Berve, in two highly source-critical studies, did not deny Alexander’s admirable military genius, but—in stark contrast to Berve—disputed the “grand” ideas attributed to him.⁴⁵ In 1958, he also put forward his objections in a monograph aimed at a wider public.⁴⁶ Both Heuß and Hampl, however, also adhered to the idea of Alexander’s ‘demonic nature’

41 Alexander Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg, “Recht und Macht in der Geschichte am Beispiel Alexanders des Großen”, *Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* 62 (1953): esp. 153.—For more details see Karl Christ, *Der andere Stauffenberg: Der Historiker und Dichter Alexander von Stauffenberg* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2008), esp. 127–129.

42 Hermann Strasburger, “Alexanders Zug durch die gedrosische Wüste”, *Hermes* 82 (1954): 456–493.

43 Alfred Heuß, “Alexander der Große und die politische Ideologie des Altertums (1954)”, in *Gesammelte Schriften: Band 1*, hrsg. Alfred Heuß (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 1995), 147–186.

44 Gerald Walser, “Zur neueren Forschung über Alexander den Großen”, *Schweizer Beiträge zur allgemeinen Geschichte* 14 (1956): esp. 371.

45 Franz Hampl, “Alexanders des Großen Hypomnemata und letzte Pläne”, in *Studies Presented to David Moore Robinson on His Seventieth Birthday: Volume II*, ed. Georgios E. Mylonas (Washington: Washington University Press, 1953), 816–829; Franz Hampl, “Alexander der Große und die Beurteilung geschichtlicher Persönlichkeiten in der modernen Historiographie”, *La Nouvelle Clío* 6 (1954): 91–136.

46 Franz Hampl, *Alexander der Große. Persönlichkeit und Geschichte* 9 (Göttingen: Muster-schmidt Verlag, 1958), esp. 81.

in order to convey the impact of his personality. This, too, may be regarded as a characteristic feature of the period, though a far cry from Schachermeyr's bizarre indecision in judging the Titan, fluctuating between empathy and horror.

Expressing his source-criticism based scepticism about the notion that great conceptions had been the driving forces behind Alexander's war of conquest, Hampl did not stand alone. In Italy, Roberto Andreotti, who then lectured in Parma, had already published a monograph in 1933 in which he criticized the prevalent trend of using Alexander for diagnosing current political affairs. He saw him as a pragmatic conqueror who had not focused on long-term objectives. He had also squandered political-organizational capital which he had been left by Philip. His conquests had not formed a coherent, organic entity and had been a matter of coincidence. The result of Andreotti's comparison of Caesar and Alexander was, therefore, not in favour of the latter.⁴⁷ In the 1950's, a number of papers appeared, some of them in German, in which Andreotti, since 1939 professor in Turin, critically questioned, above all, the attribution of grand ideas and goals to the king, who had already been elevated to the state of legend in antiquity.⁴⁸

The response to these calls for a reassessment of the "grand ideas" ascribed to Alexander in the light of source-critical considerations was low key. Remarkably enough, the translation of a monograph about the period of Hellenism, published in Moscow in 1950, appeared in East Berlin in 1958. In it, the renowned Soviet scholar A.B. Ranovič rated Alexander's policy and its impacts as generally progressive in terms of economic development within the "ancient society of slaveholders". Thus, the conquest of the East had not only been in the interest of Greece and Macedonia but had also served the interest of the ruling classes in the most highly advanced areas of the East. Alexander's attempt to establish a single empire may have been unrealistic, but was, by reason of

47 Roberto Andreotti, *Il problema politico di Alessandro Magno* (Parma: Soc. Ed. Internazionale, 1933), esp. 12, 149, 161.

48 Roberto Andreotti, "Il problema di Alessandro Magno nella storiografia dell'ultimo decennio", *Historia* 1 (1950): 583–600; Roberto Andreotti, "Per una Critica dell'Ideologia di Alessandro Magno", *Historia* 5 (1956): 257–302; Roberto Andreotti, "Die Weltmonarchie Alexanders des Großen in Überlieferung und geschichtlicher Wirklichkeit", *Saeculum* 8 (1957): 120–166.—It is also appropriate to refer to the critical portrait of Alexander drawn in lectures (1947/48) by Gaetano De Sanctis, who had lost his professorship in Rome during the Fascist period and regained it in 1944; cf. the brief report in Hugh Bowden, "Review Article: Recent Travels in Alexanderland", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 134 (2014): esp. 138–139, with further references.

its effect, remarkable in its own right. What is noteworthy for the history of scholarship is the author's largely non-polemical engagement with "bourgeois" literature.⁴⁹

Alexander's Dream of the "Brotherhood of Man"—W.W. Tarn's British Model of an Ideal World-Empire

As regards the history of reception of German literature on Alexander in the period covered here, Ulrich Wilcken, Helmut Berve and Fritz Schachermeyr will certainly rate among the most notable authors, whatever one's opinion of them. In English literature, there is one figure that is definitely central: William Woodthorp Tarn, who, in slight exaggeration, could be called the British Droysen. As he is well-known, it will do to provide some essentials of his portrayal of Alexander, if possible in Tarn's own words. Working as a private lecturer in Scotland and as Lecturer and Fellow in Cambridge, he contributed a number of chapters to the *Cambridge Ancient History*, among them the one on Alexander (1927). He was in no doubt that Alexander had been a great general, writing that "Napoleon's verdict suffices". Whether he had also been a great statesman was up for debate. Tarn highlighted in particular the structural shortcomings of his empire and doubted that Alexander had had plans for streamlining its organization: "... the true unifying force was lacking; there was no common idea, or ideal". The heterogeneity of this empire had even been greater than that of the British Empire. It could be compared with the empire of the Hapsburgs. Tarn followed this up with an interesting consideration: "... had he [i.e. Alexander] lived his full term, and trained a son, his empire, for all its defects politically, might well have achieved a cohesion beyond our belief; it needed the supreme shock of all history to break up that of the Hapsburgs, and we have to reckon, as a moulding force, with Alexander's astounding personality". The decisive legacy of this unparalleled personality at a world-historical level had not so much been the concrete empire, which then Hellenistic states had developed from, but the ideal of the *one* humankind that Alexander had conveyed: "... he proclaimed for the first time, through a

49 Abram Borisovič Ranowitsch [Ranovič], *Der Hellenismus und seine geschichtliche Rolle*, übers. Kurt Diesing (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958), esp. 29–66.—It should also be mentioned that in 1963 a monograph on Alexander in Polish was issued in London whose author, according to the English summary, strongly rejected the notion that Alexander's activities had facilitated the spread of Christianity; cf. Witold Dzięciol, *Alexander Wielki Macedonski* (London: Veritas, 1963), 245–248.

brotherhood of peoples, the brotherhood of man [...] Before Alexander, men's dreams of the ideal state had still been based on class-rule and slavery ...". This ideal had been able to assert itself throughout the Hellenistic world, which thereby also became the medium in which Christianity would spread.⁵⁰

Tarn also presented the Hellenistic world in a monograph,⁵¹ which has seen several reprints since. He was convinced that the idea of the brotherhood of man was still alive in this world as Alexander's legacy. In a lecture on *Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind* held at the British Academy in 1933, Tarn endeavoured to demonstrate this by reference to the sources: At a certain point in time it had been generally agreed "that it was the business of a king to promote Homonoia among his subjects—all his subjects without distinction of race; and we have seen that this theory ought to be connected at the start with some king, who must be later than Philip and earlier than Demetrius; and there is a definite tradition which connects the origin of the theory with Alexander". Alexander becomes the great founder of a lasting cosmopolitan idea and, in Tarn's view, the "pioneer of one of the supreme revolutions in the world's outlook". Tarn acknowledged that he was only inferring his ideal portrait: "I do not claim to have given you exact proof; it is one of those difficult borderlands of history where one does not get proofs which could be put to a jury".⁵² In order to give his convictions more weight, he began looking more closely at the sources on the history of Alexander. His labour resulted in a two-volume biography (1948),⁵³ whose second part, in addition to many individual studies, also contains an appendix (no. 25). Here the author elaborated on his central ideas and defended them against criticism expressed by German researchers, such as Wilcken, Kolbe and others. In Germany, both his monograph on *Die Kultur der hellenistischen Welt* and his large monograph on Alexander were issued in translation in the 1960's.

Tarn's notion of the conqueror turned into the originator of the cosmopolitan vision of a brotherhood of man quickly found a following. In 1934, Frederick A. Wright, Professor of Classics at London University, published a monograph on Alexander with the programmatic statement: "This book is intended for

50 William W. Tarn, "Chapter XII–XIII", in *Cambridge Ancient History: Volume IV: The Persian Empire and the West* (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1927), esp. 425, 433–437.

51 William W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilisation* (London: Arnold, 1927).

52 William W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind: From the Proceedings of the Brit. Acad. LXI* (London: Humphrey Milford Amen House, 1933), esp. 27–28.

53 William W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great: 2 Volumes* (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1948).

the general reader who wishes to know something of the greatest man that the human race has yet produced".⁵⁴ Among the researchers Wright referred to, such as Droysen, Wilcken and the French scholar Radet, who will be dealt with below, Tarn's name was especially highlighted. So Wright's Alexander, too, was far more than just a conqueror; in fact, he stands out among all others: "... no one of his predecessors had the wish, and no one of his successors had the power to give, as he gave, a superior civilization to those whom they conquered: no one endeavoured, as he endeavoured, to weld all the peoples of his empire into one harmonious nation". Nowadays, the world was waiting for such an Alexander.⁵⁵

During World War II, Victor Ehrenberg, who had been able to immigrate to Great Britain in 1939, also joined in the unrestrained praise for Alexander's cosmopolitan objectives. He clearly preserved the general outlines of his former picture of Alexander when, contrasting the great Macedonian with Caesar and Napoleon, he conceded: "Alexander undoubtedly was an Oriental sultan". But it is decisive that he appreciated Alexander as a true cosmopolitan to whom reservations regarding race had been unknown:

It was even more revolutionary that a conqueror who had a Greek education threw overboard the Greek pride in being the race destined by nature to rule, the *Herrenvolk*, and proclaimed the equality and the rights, if not of all mankind, of the leading nations in West and East. [...] He proclaimed the unity of the *oecumene*, and was therefore the first great universalist, the first in a sense whom we may call cosmopolitan.

This evaluation of Alexander was clearly directed against the policy of the Nazis and the widespread identification with the ancient Hellenes in German scholarship. In a postscript (dated 1944) to the 1941 study cited here, Ehrenberg vehemently rejected any comparison between Alexander and Hitler: "Alexander's empire did not survive him, but a new order rose which determined the course of history. Hitler's new order was dead before his own death".⁵⁶

Among the authors who strongly advocated the idea of Alexander's cosmopolitan visions in Tarn's sense, there was the American researcher Charles

54 Frederick. A. Wright, *Alexander the Great* (London, and New York: Routledge, 1934), preface.

55 Wright, *Alexander the Great*, 241–262, quotation 241.

56 Victor Ehrenberg, "Alexander the Great (1941/1946)", in *Aspects of the Ancient World: Essays and Reviews*, by Victor Ehrenberg (Oxford: Blackwell, 1946), esp. 175, 177–178. On this cf. Briant, *Alexandre: Exégèse des lieux communs*, 467–470.

Alexander Robinson Jr., who lectured at Brown University.⁵⁷ The title of a monograph published in 1947 is programmatic: *Alexander the Great: The Meeting of East and West in World Government and Brotherhood*. Droysen comes to mind when the author links Alexander's campaign to an opening up of the world, which thereby developed modern traits, and emphasizes the long-term impacts of his policy. Even if his dream of the "brotherhood of man" had spread slowly, his "idea of the *oecumene*" had immediately gained acceptance. Alexander's deification had "made it easier to unite under him different races". Remarkably enough, Robinson viewed the mentality of the Greeks differently to Ehrenberg in his text cited above: "The Greek never had any racial prejudice of a physical sort".⁵⁸

One of Alexander's admirers and adepts of Tarn's conception was the British Major General John Frederick Charles Fuller, a prominent member of the British Union of Fascists and highly prolific military writer. He stated that his interest in the figure of Alexander had already been aroused in 1917 during his deployment in France. In 1958, during the Cold War period, Fuller published his work *The Generalship of Alexander the Great*, which was also translated into German (1961). He expressed his conviction that even in World War II various statesmen and generals-in-chief could have learnt a lot from Alexander: "they might have avoided many of the colossal blunders perpetrated by them".⁵⁹ In his book, however, Fuller not only appreciated Alexander's strategic genius and leadership qualities but also his statesmanship. He went along with Tarn that Alexander's great objective had not been a global empire but the consolidation of what had been attained. He had been guided by the idea of a "reconciliation of mankind". This had, however, not meant a fusion of peoples in a physical sense.⁶⁰

Tarn's ideas continued to find an echo for a while. In his own 1966 monograph on Alexander, published in New York within the series *Rulers and States-*

57 In her bibliography on Alexander, Nancy J. Burich, *Alexander the Great: A Bibliography* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1970), 133–134, records 19 titles, including a number of monographs published by Robinson Jr.

58 Charles Alexander Robinson Jr., *Alexander the Great: The Meeting of East and West in World Government and Brotherhood* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1947), esp. 235–237. It can be presumed that Robinson's book was deliberately distributed in post-war Austria: the copy in use here from the library of the University of Innsbruck is marked with the stamp: Property of / Information Services Branch / United States Forces in Austria.

59 John F.C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Alexander the Great* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1958), esp. 7, cf. 306–314.

60 Fuller, *Generalship of Alexander the Great*, esp. 276–280.

men of the World, John W. Snyder, for instance, declared that “Tarn’s work remains the best modern work”. With firm trust in Arrian, Snyder sought to defend his hero against hostile ancient historical tradition.⁶¹ Nancy J. Burich, too, praised Tarn’s 1948 two-volume work highly in her *Alexander Bibliography*.⁶² The reasons that had once prompted Tarn to devise his exceedingly idealistic portrayal of Alexander were characterized by Peter Green in his monograph on Alexander, also published for the first time in 1970:

Tarn had an ethical dilemma to solve when he set about this task. By the time he came to write, imperial expansionism was no longer a tolerable programme in the minds of progressive intellectuals unless it had some sort of idealistic or missionary creed to underwrite it ... He had to find some ulterior goal for this imperial adventurer [i.e. Alexander] to pursue, and duly did so.⁶³

A statement by Ernst Badian should be added here: Tarn’s conception “was only worked out in the declining days of the Empire, and appeared in its final form only as its nostalgic epitaph in 1948”.⁶⁴ In retrospect, Ernst Badian, an Austrian-born emigrant who had come to the USA via New Zealand and England, can be regarded as Tarn’s decisive critic. It should be remembered, however, that among Tarn’s contemporaries in British historical research there were also different opinions on Alexander’s significance.

In the Shadow of Tarn—A Look at Different Images of Alexander’s Legacy within Anglo-American Scholarship

In 1929, Reverend Edgar Iliff Robson, who had graduated from Cambridge and also made himself a name as a translator of Arrian, published a monograph on Alexander of an exceptional nature. In view of the conflicting ancient historical sources, he wished to find a superordinate viewpoint from which to grasp

61 John W. Snyder, *Alexander the Great. Rulers and Statesman of the World* IV (New York, 1966), esp. 212.

62 Burich, *Alexander the Great*, esp. 78.

63 Peter Green, *Alexander of Macedon 356–323 BC: A Historical Biography* (1970). repr. ²1974 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), esp. 483–484.

64 Ernst Badian, “The Alexander Romance”, review of *Alexander the Great*, by Robin Lane Fox. *The New York Review of Books*, September 19, 1974 [Copy of the online-article], <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1974/09/19/the-alexander-romance/>.

and present Alexander's activities: "from another angle, from the inner rather than the outer, from the imaginative rather than the logical". He considered Alexander one of the "great men of an age", whose ideas and deeds drove world history forward.⁶⁵ Alexander's personality had been extremely colourful, "almost a Protean character". But he had been able to bounce on the waves of the zeitgeist like a surf-rider. Robson expressly uses "the simile of surf-riding". An author with a theological education, he felt that Alexander had died in due time: "and thus it was that most of the evil that Alexander did was interred with his bones, and the good he did lived after him". This "good" was mental and spiritual evolution: "Hellenism was, in fact, an immense overflow of the spiritual and the mental". Alexander's successors, the Diadochi, then acted as "the real apostles of Hellenism".⁶⁶

A somewhat peculiar portrayal of Alexander was created by the Egyptologist and versatile writer Arthur Weigall. His captivatingly written *Alexander the Great* appeared in London in 1933 and was also translated into German in 1941. From infancy, Weigall's Alexander was filled with mystical religiosity; he retained a childlike piety but at the same time was capable of the greatest cruelty. Yet for all these inconsistencies, Alexander was convinced of his own divinity, considered himself to be a saviour and indulged in the unreal dream that he could rule the entire world. "It seems to me, therefore, that there must have been a very strong element of religious mysticism and piety in his nature; and, indeed, the fact is obvious, for at every turn we find him ministering to the gods with genuinely uplifted heart, so far as can be seen," the author explained in the introduction to his work.⁶⁷

The character drawn by Lewis V. Cummings in his 1940 Boston monograph on Alexander was of a quite different nature again. It is a colourfully written portrayal, full of detail, which, after a reprint in New York in 1968, enjoyed several reissues and is still present on the market.⁶⁸ The author is hardly craving sympathy for his hero when he states from the outset, "Alexander was far from perfect, either as a king or as an army commander" (preface v) or labels

65 E[dgar] Iliff Robson, *Alexander the Great: A Biographical Study* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1929), esp. 8, 24.

66 Robson, *Alexander the Great*, esp. 265, 268, 272.

67 Arthur Weigall, *Alexander the Great* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1933), esp. 15.

68 What is as noteworthy as this sustained reception is the publisher's information about the author: "Lewis V. Cummings was a cartographer for the British Intelligence Service when he first travelled through the Middle East and Asia. His biography of Alexander the Great is based on exhaustive research and extensive collaboration with scholars at Columbia University."

him as “the raging killer”. He also refrains from pondering the significance of Alexander’s activities for world history. Cummings’ Alexander did not aim high for the good of humanity. He was driven by the sheer instinct of the conqueror: “No military conqueror can rise—by virtue of the limitations of his military mentality—above the political-social ideas of his day, and this was the day when the ethical ideals—and those of the military mind have advanced shockingly little since—were those of the wolf, when the eager and bloodthirsty gods urged eager and conscienceless butchers—like Alexander—to further rapine and slaughter”.⁶⁹

Cummings’ verdict resembles that of those biographers from the recent past who ‘blackwashed’ Alexander. This may explain the enduring success of the book. At the time it was written, it was an exception. “No soldier in history is more indisputably ‘great’ than Alexander, surpassing the majority even of good and eminent generals, as do Napoleon and very few others”. This quotation from a book on Alexander by Andrew R. Burn was much more in line with mainstream views. It was issued in London in 1947 as part of the *Teach Yourself History Library* series, which sought to provide scope for learning from the past. The author, working as a lecturer at the University of Glasgow, wrote matter-of-factly, appreciated Alexander’s achievements as conqueror but remained markedly reluctant in assessing their long-term effect. “To sum up: with all allowance for the tendencies of his age, the powerful personality of Alexander did make a difference; but the difference he made consisted in carrying much farther the Greek push into nearer Asia, which would almost certainly have taken place even without him; and the effect of this was to overstrain the strength of Hellenism (very much as Napoleon overstrained the strength of France) with results that were not ultimately for the good of humanity”.⁷⁰ This distanced Burn clearly from Tarn’s vision of the great civilizing mission that Alexander had been out on.

The first decisive blow against this vision, however, came from Ernst Badian, as was already mentioned above. In a paper published in 1958, he subjected the conception which Tarn had first set forth in his 1933 Raleigh Lecture to a fundamental criticism and called Tarn’s “figure of Alexander the Dreamer” quite simply a “phantom”.⁷¹ Badian himself produced a number of consistently critically oriented papers on Alexander’s activities and their perception by

69 Lewis V. Cummings, *Alexander the Great* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940), esp. 413, 435–436.

70 Andrew R. Burn, *Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic Empire* (London et al.: Hodder & Stoughton, 1947), esp. 274, 284–285.

71 Ernst Badian, “Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind”, *Historia* 7 (1958): 1.

posterity but did not leave a monograph on the Macedonian. He for once let himself get carried away to craft a rounded character sketch of Alexander but later consented only reluctantly to having this study (published in 1962 and 1968) included in the collection of his writings on Alexander, which then appeared in 2012, shortly after his death.⁷² As a document of its age, the small study on *Alexander the Great and the Loneliness of Power* is genuinely noteworthy. The author left no doubt as to Alexander's military genius and his political capabilities. But he viewed the career of the conqueror as "an almost embarrassingly perfect illustration of the man who conquered the world, only to lose his soul." The growing confrontation with oppositional movements around him, perceived or real, had increasingly turned him into an isolated, murderous despot, who, metaphorically speaking, had entered a pact with the devil to secure his power. In a bitter summary of Alexander's significance in world history, Badian finally states: "His genius was such that he ended an epoch and began another—but one of unceasing war and misery, from which only exhaustion produced an approach to order after two generations and peace at last under the Roman Empire".⁷³

In 1971, the year in which Badian started his professorship at Harvard University, a critical survey appeared in which the author took stock of the literature on Alexander released between 1948 and 1967. After weighing Tarn and Schachermeyr against each other, as "giants in this field", he addressed the "reaction" to their "gigantic and poetic works". Judging Andreotti as too "minimalistic", he concluded: "The most sensible guidelines are perhaps those set up by Hampl." They obviously corresponded most closely to his own views. At the same time, he appreciated Schachermeyr's work as "the most fruitful ... and the greatest service". His concluding expectation, "We are perhaps beginning to emerge from the Alexander Romance", has revealed itself to be an illusion.⁷⁴

72 Cf. Eugene N. Borza, "Introduction", in *Collected Papers on Alexander the Great*, by Ernst Badian (London, and New York: Routledge, 2012), esp. xvi–xvii.

73 Ernst Badian, "Alexander the Great and the Loneliness of Power (*AUMLA* 1962)", in *Studies in Greek and Roman History*, by Ernst Badian (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), 203–204.

74 Ernst Badian, "Alexander the Great: 1948–1967", *The Classical World* 65 (1971): 45–46. On Badian and his judgement on Schachermeyr, cf. the critical remarks in Briant, *Alexandre: Exégèse des lieux communs*, esp. 398–406.

French Scholarship and Alexander's Empire as a Model of Benevolent Colonialism

Just as W.W. Tarn stands out in the English literature on Alexander of the period examined here, so does Georges Radet in the French. After a number of preliminary studies, the scholar, who lectured at the University of Bordeaux, published his enthusiastically written *Alexandre le Grand* (1931), which saw a posthumous reprint in 1950. In the dedication of his book to a French general, he links the actions of the French army in the Orient to the glory of Alexander. The latter becomes the standard-bearer of the ideal of a benevolent colonialism. He had been the first in history to set up a form of 'benign imperialism, based on cosmopolitan justice' ('l'impérialisme de clémence, à base de justice cosmopolite'). However, it is not a rationally calculating hero that takes the programme out to the world, but one strongly affected by emotions. In the Orient, the "land of imagination and the unreal", everything inherent in his nature burgeoned beyond all measure. He chased after his dream of a universal monarchy ever more fervently, after a world order consolidated by a god-king [roi-dieu]. And this ideal outlived the chaotic breakup of Alexander's empire. What remains is his role as representative of a "Dionysian imperialism", i.e. an "imperialism imbued with divine essence" ("impérialisme d'essence divine").⁷⁵

Radet's *Alexandre* attracted a lot of attention at the time, yet got a mostly critical reception. His lofty style and the character portrait of his hero were very specific. However, Radet was by no means the only author to use the figure of Alexander for the presentation of a humane imperialism, one that provided for the well-being of the conquered. In 1926, an extensive publication on *Macedonian Imperialism* by Paul Jouguet, papyrologist and philosopher at the Sorbonne, was released. It was translated into English in 1928 and has been reprinted in both languages since. Henri Berr, renowned philosopher and advocate of a '*Nouvelle Histoire*', supplied it with a preface in which he acknowledged the Macedonian policy of conquest as an example of 'moderate imperialism': "Sometimes, too, imperialism is tempered, is tinged with motives and sentiments which render it less oppressive, and fit to become a factor for deep-seated unity". Alexander had implemented "the magnificent plan of a world-empire ... founded by a philosopher-king" and sought "to unite nations

75 Georges Radet, *Alexandre le Grand*. repr. (1931) (Paris: L'Artisan du Livre, 1950), esp. 12, 16, 411, 416.

and races—even by ties of blood”.⁷⁶ Jouguet himself drafted a somewhat more soberly written portrayal of Alexander but also credited him with great objectives and plans for the benefit of mankind: “... as he planned to mingle the races to establish concord and peace, so he sought to increase trade between the peoples to ensure their welfare”. Pursuing his expansionist policy, he had conferred the greatest benefit on both the Greeks (and their culture) and the Orient: “Alexander not only saved Hellenism; he covered the East with it.”⁷⁷

The illusion of a benevolent colonialism had left its mark on Berr's, Jouguet's and Radet's portrait of Alexander. In 1935, Jacques Benoist-Méchin paid tribute to Alexander as a man of action, an example that a jaded nation should draw on when it comes to regaining former greatness. A declared admirer of (Nazi-) Germany and an expert regarding its military history, he had published Droysen's *Alexander* of 1833 in a translation. The book is still available on the market in a paperback edition. In his preface, in which he also referred to Berve's introduction to its reprint, he praised Droysen's “masterwork” effusively and finally recommended reading it with a view to the present time. It could show us how a person of genius is capable of giving fresh impetus to a period in which history seems to be running out of breath. We, too, were in need of a cult of a great personality. Those peoples and nations that were striving for greatness with vigour and determination would find their much awaited leader (“le chef quelles espèrent”).⁷⁸ Later on, after his conviction as a collaborator during the Vichy period and his pardon, the author was to write his own novelistic history of Alexander (see below).

Admiration largely continued to dominate sentiment surrounding the figure of Alexander. In 1937, Raymond Burgard, publisher of the popular series *La découverte du monde* (released by Gallimard) issued a self-penned monograph on Alexander. He recognized his policy of fusion as a grand idea and emphasized the world-historical significance of his campaign. It had resulted in a “renovation of the Orient” but had also, as a countermovement, led to the expansion of Oriental religions.⁷⁹ Stronger words of appreciation can be found in the relevant volume of the *Histoire Grecque*, published by Gustave Glotz, which, after his death, was presented by his successors Pierre Roussel and

76 Pierre Jouguet, *Macedonian Imperialism. And the Hellenization of the East*. repr. (1928) (London, and New York: Routledge, 1996), esp. xii–xiv.

77 Jouguet, *Macedonian Imperialism*, 108, 110.

78 Jacques Benoist-Méchin, “Préface”, in *Jean Gustave Droysen: Histoire d'Alexandre le Grand*, ed. Jacques Benoist-Méchin (Paris: Éditions Bernard Grasset, 1935), 24–25.

79 Raymond Burgard, *L'expédition d'Alexandre et la conquête de l'Asie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1937), 229–236.

Robert Cohen in 1939 and enjoyed a second edition in 1945. Cohen authored the chapter on Alexander, building on Glotz's manuscript. The assessment of Alexander's aims and long-term impacts of his activities follows the tradition of Droysen and Tarn: Alexander disregarded any racial prejudice. His great dream was to unite Europe and Asia, Occident and Orient, forever through ethnic, economic and cultural links.⁸⁰

In 1947, the series of quite favourable portrayals of Alexander examined here so far was significantly interrupted by the depiction of the hero that René Grousset created for the anthology *Figures de Proue*, i.e. figureheads. His work appeared in Vienna under the title *Schicksalsstunden der Geschichte* (1951). Grousset was a renowned specialist in the history of the Near East. After his career had been affected in the Vichy era, he was elected to the Académie Française in 1946. His book sets out by describing Alexander's campaign as a heroic deed. However, having experienced the "suicide of Europe", Grousset was highly critical of its outcome: he viewed the legacy of the conqueror, who had been driven by excessive ambition and whom he repeatedly compared with Napoleon, with great scepticism, thereby fundamentally questioning the paradigm of a benevolent imperialism. The example of Alexander had shown that the potential inherent in any colonization effort will be exhausted sooner or later and the colonized countries will revert to their old nature. Traditional patterns in German research come to mind when Grousset states that Alexander's great conquests sapped the vitality of Hellenism—with disastrous consequences for demography and morals. Oriental mysticism prevailed over Hellenic rationality. So it is not the Hellenization of the Orient but the Orientalization of Hellas that forms the legacy of the great conqueror.⁸¹

Grousset's reservations were just an interlude in the series of idealizing portraits of Alexander. In 1951, a monograph of the great Macedonian was issued in Paris, drafted by Léon Homo, a specialist in Roman history. He had been active at the University of Lyon until his retirement in 1940. Homo provided an unpretentiously written, dense depiction, together with few footnotes and many source references. His portrait of Alexander is largely conventional and positive. He recognized, for instance, the policy of fusion which Alexander

80 Gustave Glotz, Pierre Russel and Robert Cohen, *Alexandre et l'hellénisation du monde antique*. Histoire Grecque IV/1. repr. 2nd Edition (1939) (Paris: Presses Univ. de France, 1945), esp. 250–253.

81 Cf. René Grousset, "Alexander oder die Wende der antiken Kulturen", in *Schicksalsstunden der Geschichte*, hrsg. René Grousset (Wien: Ullstein-Verlag, 1951), esp. 53, 71–72. For Grousset's assessment of French colonial policy cf. Briant, *Alexandre: Exégèse des lieux communs*, esp. 452–454, 477–479.

had pursued at all levels: in the army and administration, through the founding of cities, in marriage policy, by promoting commerce, transport and—not least—culture. The Hellenization of the Eastern world had been a “fundamental chapter in Alexander’s programme” and had lived on as his legacy.⁸² In 1954, a concisely written *Alexandre le Grand* penned by Paul Cloché, *doyen honoraire* at the University of Besançon, followed in the popular series *que sais-je?* A second edition appeared in 1961. Cloché portrays Alexander in a basically favourable light, avoiding effusive idealizations. He was aware of the ruler’s authoritarian traits but gave him credit for his great accomplishments of a military, but also an organizational and cultural nature. Alexander had promoted the economy and science, had had a liberal attitude to religious issues and pursued a ‘policy of cooperation between and fusion of’ Orient and Occident. His achievement had been “extraordinarily brilliant” but at the same time “full of contradictions”.⁸³

It is noteworthy that Alexander’s activities lent themselves to being idealized by both the extreme political left and the extreme right. In 1959, the year of his death, André Bonnard’s portrayal of Alexander appeared in the third volume of his *Civilisation grecque*. He had worked as a Greek scholar at the University of Lausanne. Because of his pacifist and simultaneous pro-Soviet commitment he had been brought to court for treason in his native Switzerland in 1954. Posthumously, he received various honours. In 1967, a translation of his work was published in Dresden, then German Democratic Republic. Bonnard’s Alexander and Tarn’s share common ground. The genius of the great conqueror and his lasting service to the idea of the brotherhood of man are highlighted in emphatic terms. In his personality, he had combined cruelty and mercy. He had confronted the policy of racial discrimination between Hellenes and barbarians with a new vision of humanity. In this way, he had headed a cultural movement that had led to the emergence of Christian brotherhood.⁸⁴

On the other extreme end of the political spectrum, there was Jacques Benoist-Méchin, who in 1964 issued the monograph on Alexander already mentioned briefly. This popular work, ignored in professional circles, first appeared in Lausanne, then in Paris (1976) and has been republished several times since. In 1966 and 1967, translations into English and German came out. The book is

82 Léon Homo, *Alexandre le Grand* (Paris: Arthème Fayard, 1951), esp. 241–253, quotation 287.

83 Paul Cloché, *Alexandre le Grand* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954), esp. 117, 122.

84 André Bonnard, *Die Kultur der Griechen: Band III: Von Euripides bis Alexandria* (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1967), 171–205.

still on the market today. The novel-like depiction, which is not exactly lacking in drama and imagination, presents Alexander as the first in a row of personalities in world history who sought to realize an ambitious dream: the fusion of Orient and Occident. According to the author, it is a dream that history itself (sic!) had been dreaming time and again for a span of two thousand years (cf. preface 11). The desire to establish a universal monarchy had first taken shape in Alexander when he had been looking at the mortal remains of his royal opponent Darius. From then on, he had pursued this dream, which had also become his legacy.⁸⁵

Two years previously, in 1962, Benoist-Méchin had already set forth his vision of Alexander's dream in a slim chapter of the anthology *Alexandre, Génie et Réalité*, issued in Paris by illustrious authors under the lead of Jacques de Bourbon-Busset. This publication (also translated into German in 1964⁸⁶) concluded with an essay by Jules Romain, renowned dramatist and politically committed writer on the conservative right.⁸⁷ In a comparison which he made between Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon, the great Macedonian conqueror does not come off well. Far away from any source-critical studies, the author painted a psychopathic portrait of Alexander. His hero seems like a big child that is not able to control his emotions and is capable of extreme cruelty. Though Jules Romain admittedly highlighted Alexander's outstanding military accomplishments, he was more than reluctant about his legacy to posterity. Such criticism, however, was not typical of the genre of popular representations, just as, on the other hand, largely idealizing tendencies dominated the portrayal of Alexander in the professional publications of the period under consideration here.⁸⁸

85 Jacques Benoist-Méchin, *Alexandre le Grand ou le rêve dépassé (356–323 av. J.-C.)* (Lausanne: Clairefontaine et la Guilde du Livre, 1964).—On Benoist-Méchin and his Alexander cf. Briant, *Alexandre: Exégèse des lieux communs*, 297–312.

86 Jacques Benoist-Méchin, "Herr der Welt", in *Alexander der Große: Das Genie und seine Welt*, von Jules Romain (Wien et al.: Kurt Desch, 1964), 149–193.

87 Jules Romain, "Alexander, Cäsar, Napoleon", in *Alexander der Große: Das Genie und seine Welt*, von Jules Romain (Wien et al.: Kurt Desch, 1964), 259–279.

88 For information on further developments cf., for instance, Reinhold Bichler, "Wie lange wollen wir noch mit Alexander dem Großen siegen? Karl Christ zum Gedenken", in *Alte Geschichte zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik: Gedenkschrift Karl Christ*, hrsg. Volker Losemann (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 25–64; Briant, *Alexandre: Exégèse des lieux communs*, esp. 286–349, 504–555.

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Alexander as Glorious Failure: The Case of Robert Rossen's *Alexander the Great* (1956)

Alastair J.L. Blanshard

There seems to be something wrong with *Alexander the Great* as a dramatic theme. The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century playwrights failed to make much of it, though they tried hard. It beat Terence Rattigan in “Adventure Story”, and it has beaten the American Robert Rossen who wrote, produced and directed the subject here.

C.A. LEJEUNE, ‘Alexander and Co.’, *The Observer*, March 25, 1956, 15

...

If one wished to take the time and had the patience, [one] might derive more out of “Alexander” on a second seeing.

E. SCHALLERT, “Premiere of ‘Alexander’ assumes festive character”, *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1956, 32

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The reception of the classical world is never easy. We fool ourselves if we imagine otherwise. Despite the impassioned claims of many devotees, it is hard to make a case for the intrinsic, transhistorical value of antiquity. Part of the problem with any claim to the timeless value of antiquity is that the aspects of the classical past that we esteem change so dramatically over time. Classics is constantly being reinvented. Each generation rethinks and recalibrates itself against the classical past anew. Each age finds a different character, style, or idea to value. Different figures are emulated and these figures can rise and fall out of favour with rapidity. So, for example, at the start of the American Revolution, no figure spoke with more eloquence to the “give me liberty or give me death” generation than the Republican martyr, Cato the Younger. However, by the end of the Revolution, with victory achieved, such radical sentiments needed to be moderated. Cato’s failure and suicide were almost an embarrassment. A figure

who represented the transition from war to peace was required. And so the love of Cato gave way to the figure of Cincinnatus. Thus, while George Washington actively promoted an identification with Cato early in his career, by the time he became President he was only too happy to be proclaimed “the new Cincinnatus”, a title equally coveted by his successor to the presidency, John Adams.¹ It is tempting to imagine that some characters are so monumental in their nature, so impressive in their acts, so influential in their legacy, that they are immune to such vagaries of fashion. Alexander the Great would seem to be one such figure. As a result, it is worth paying attention then to those moments when Alexander did not prove to be a sure-fire winner. We gain greater appreciation of the dynamics of the reception of Alexander if we acknowledge that those moments of successful appropriation are never guaranteed and are always hard won. Concentrating on failed moments of reception—moments when the Alexander story failed to inspire, delight, or provoke imitation—helps bring into relief both the contingency and the potency of the reception of Alexander the Great.

Robert Rossen's film *Alexander the Great* (1956) represents one such moment of failure. From the moment of the film's release, it struggled to gain popularity with either the critics or the general public. With only a couple of notable exceptions, the reviews were almost universally negative.² Critics found it long and dull. “It took Alexander the Great some 10 years to conquer the known world ... It seems to take Robert Rossen almost as long to recreate in film this slice of history”, complained *Variety*.³ The acting was equally derided. The trade publication, *The Monthly Film Bulletin*, which was produced by the British Film Institute, was particularly scathing:

Conviction is considerably dissipated here by Rossen's refusal, in spite of obvious serious intentions, to present character in terms much more convincing than comic strip history. Richard Burton makes Alexander a familiar figure of beefcake implacability, and the Macedonian tyrant of Frederic March is depressingly predicable in characterization ... Danielle Dar-

1 For a discussion of the figures of Cato and Cincinnatus in American Revolutionary ideology, and especially their impact on Washington and Adams, see Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 57–61 (Cato), 55–56, 70–72 (Cincinnatus).

2 A.H. Weiler is practically alone amongst the major film critics in his praise for this film—“Screen: A Saga of Ancient Titans”, *The New York Times*, March 29, 1956, 23.

3 Brog, “Alexander, the Great”, *Variety*, April 4, 1956, 6. Cf. A.H. Weiler “Expensive Heroics”, *The New York Times*, April 1, 1956, 93.

rieux intriguingly miscast as Olympias. The script, laced with actual transcriptions from the Philippic and Olynthiac speeches, is solidly unimaginative ... a well-intentioned historical jamboree.⁴

The passing of time has not seemed to alter these opinions. A decade after the release of the film, when *Alexander the Great* was about to be shown on television, the TV critic Gerard Fay lamented that the fact it was still being inflicted on audiences. Pointing out the fact that when panoramic films were shown on television they lost approximately 10% of the shot at the edges of the screen, Fay went on to wonder whether there were films where losing 90% of the film wouldn't be a tragedy. *Alexander the Great* seemed to him, one such film.⁵ Even in the *New York Times* obituary for Robert Rossen, the kindest thing that could be said about the film was that it was "literate, but not especially successful".⁶

The failure of *Alexander the Great* (1956) is surprising. Robert Rossen was an accomplished filmmaker. His 1961 film, *The Hustler* is continually listed amongst the greatest films of the mid-twentieth century and the Library of Congress has added it to its prestigious list of "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" films worthy of preservation. The success of *The Hustler* is not an isolated occurrence, it comes towards the end of a long chain of cinematic successes for Rossen. He had begun career as a successful young playwright before Mervyn Le Roy, the leading director at Warner Brother's, recognizing his talents, lured him to Hollywood.⁷ Rossen's skills as a scriptwriter were soon realized and he produced many successful scripts during his time at Warner's. Amongst his most successful were the scripts for the films *They Won't Forget* (1937), a bleak story about a miscarriage of justice in a murder trial, and *Dust Be My Destiny* (1939), a film about a young man struggling against the social conditions into which he was born. Both scripts deal with themes that became important for Rossen's body of work, namely the often-impossible struggle for

4 R.B., "Alexander the Great, U.S.A., 1955," *Monthly Film Bulletin*, January 1, 1956, 55.

5 Gerard Fay, "'Alexander the Great' and 'Pretty Polly' on Television," *The Guardian*, July 26, 1966, 7. Cf. the *Observer* TV guide of 13/11/1983 which described the film as a "ponderous epic".

6 "Robert Rossen Is Dead," *The New York Times*, February 19, 1966, 27. It should be noted that *Alexander the Great* nevertheless has always appeared in retrospectives of Robert Rossen's work. Cf. Eugene Archer, "Old Rossen Films Planned in Series," *The New York Times*, February 10, 1962, 14.

7 For a survey of Rossen's career, see Alan Casty, *The Films of Robert Rossen* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art), 1969, 1–54. Cf. Richard Combs, "The Beginner's Rossen," *Monthly Film Bulletin* 53, no. 624 (1986): 28–31.

justice against institutional oppression and the plight of young men unable to channel their energies into positive outcomes. In 1947, Rossen made the transition from writer to producer/director, pioneering a trend that would become increasingly common in Hollywood in the following decades.⁸ His capabilities as a director were recognized by the tremendous success of one of his first films *Body and Soul* (1947), a film still regarded as one of the best early films about boxing. As is typical in Rossen's films, it features a young male lead, Charley Davis (John Garfield) who owing to his tremendous talent finds himself plagued by temptations and increasing tensions with his family and those who love him.

The financial success of *Body and Soul* (1947) allowed Rossen to start up his own production company and to enter into a distribution contract with Columbia pictures. However, at this point in his career, Rossen's earlier political activities came back to haunt him. From 1937 until 1944, Rossen had been an active member of the Communist Party and, while growing increasingly disillusioned with the Party, he had not cut off all official ties until 1947. In May of that year, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) began its investigations into alleged Communist activities in Hollywood and Rossen was named by Jack L. Warner and other witnesses as a member of the Communist party. Rossen was amongst the first nineteen so-called "unfriendly witnesses" and was subpoenaed by the committee.⁹ Fortunately for him, he was never required to appear. After its experience with the first ten hostile witnesses, who were subsequently cited and imprisoned for contempt of Congress ("The Hollywood Ten"), HUAC stopped calling witnesses. The fact that Rossen had left the Communist Party by this stage allowed him to continue to work in the film industry and avoid the ensuing blacklist. It was during this period that he produced one of his finest films, *All the King's Men* (1949), a story of political corruption that won the Oscar for Best Motion that year. Rossen was also nominated for Best Director.

As concern in Washington increased about the influence of the Communist Party in Hollywood, Rossen found himself unable to escape the scrutiny of HUAC. In 1951, he was again summoned to appear before the committee. His attempt to avoid the subpoena by hiding out in Mexico proved ultimately unviable and he returned to the United States where he pleaded the Fifth Amendment and refused to incriminate any figure for their involvement in the

8 Philip K. Scheuer, "A Town Called Hollywood: Writers, Once Producers, Now Want to Be Directors," *Los Angeles Times*, May 1, 1955, E2.

9 For details of Rossen's appearance before the committee, see Casty, *The Films of Robert Rossen*, 19–20.

Communist Party.¹⁰ This act of defiance led to his blacklisting by the studios. For two years, Rossen was without work. Bridling under the restrictions of the blacklist, Rossen wrote to HUAC in 1953 and agreed that he would give evidence about the involvement of himself and others in the Communist Party. On May 7, 1953 in New York, Rossen gave evidence to the committee and named fifty-seven other members of the Communist Party. None of these names were new, they had all been cited in earlier evidence given by others, yet Rossen felt that his naming of these members was a form of betrayal. In explaining his decision to recant and give evidence, Rossen told the committee "The decision that I arrived at in 1951 was an individual decision ... the position I had taken at the time was a position of what I considered to be individual morality ... I did a lot of thinking. I don't think, after 2 years of thinking, that any one individual can ever indulge himself in the luxury of individual morality".¹¹

Sacrificing his morality allowed Rossen to work again. He established an independent film company and entered into a two-picture deal with United Artists.¹² *Alexander the Great* was the first film of Rossen's comeback. There was no reason why it should not have been a success. Rossen had long been captivated by the figure of Alexander and three years of solid research had gone into the production of the film.¹³ He had sharpened his skills as a scriptwriter and a director over almost two decades of practice. The budget of \$2.5 million was not enormous, but the decision to film entirely in Spain meant that he was able to produce a film for \$2.5 million that would have cost \$12 million if it had been produced in Hollywood.¹⁴ The film was able to take advantage of the latest advances in cinema technology. Rossen organized a comparative

10 "10 More Hollywood Figures Summoned: Four Sought in Vain for Serving Subpoenas to House Red Hearings," *Los Angeles Times*, May 4, 1951, A1.

11 *Hearings Before the Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives: 1953* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1953), 1456. For discussion of Rossen's appearance before the committee, see Casty, *The Films of Robert Rossen*, 28–32.

12 "Rossen Back in Action after 2-Year Layoff," *Variety*, July 1, 1953, 3, 14; Thomas M. Pryor "Rossen to Return to United Artists," *The New York Times*, July 2, 1953, 19.

13 M.E. Freedgood, "Alexander's Researcher," *The New York Times*, December 11, 1955, 156.

14 Louis Berg, "Alexander Conquers a New World," *Los Angeles Times*, September 4, 1955, F8. For the budget of a little over two million, see Jane Cianfarra "'Alexander' Band: International Troupe Films Rossen's 'Alexander the Great' in Spain," *The New York Times*, April 24, 1955, X5. Earlier decisions to intercut the scenes filmed in Spain with shots from ancient sites in Greece (cf. Howard Thompson, "Of Pictures and People: Robert Rossen Set to Film 'Alexander the Great'," *The New York Times*, August 1, 1954, X5) were abandoned.

trial of rival widescreen shooting processes, testing out both CinemaScope and VistaVision for his film.¹⁵ He eventually decided to film in CinemaScope and even built his sets to compensate for the depth distortions of CinemaScope's anamorphic lens.¹⁶ The quality of the combined effects of CinemaScope and Technicolor were praised by reviewers.¹⁷ The subject matter of the film—a troubled young man, plagued by the problems of success and ambition and the ensuing tensions with his family—was a theme that Rossen had dealt with countless times before. Moreover, if suffering leads to great art then his experience at the hands of HUAC should have put him into an ideal state for depicting issues relating to the use and abuse of power.¹⁸

Rossen was also assisted by an extremely talented cast, many of whom had experience playing characters from classical antiquity. A couple of years earlier, Richard Burton (Alexander) has been nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actor for his portrayal of Marcellus Gallio, the son of a Roman senator who sacrifices all for his faith and defies the Emperor Caligula, in Henry Koster's *The Robe* (1953). Fredric March (Philip II) had early in his career played the lead in Cecil B. DeMille *Sign of the Cross* (1932). In a role not dissimilar to Burton's, March had played Marcus Superbus, the prefect of Rome, sentenced to death by Nero for failing to renounce his Christian faith. Barry Jones (Aristotle) had only the year previously appeared as the Emperor Claudius in *Demetrius and the Gladiators* (1954) and had played Socrates in Maxwell Anderson's play *Barefoot in Athens* (1951).¹⁹ Both Niall MacGinnis (Parmenion) and Peter Cushing (Memnon) had been involved in Sir Laurence Olivier's 1951 productions of *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Caesar and Cleopatra*. Cushing had also starred in the Old Vic's 1949 production of Anouilh's *Antigone*. The 1953/4 season of the Old Vic had seen Claire Bloom (Barsine) play Virgilia opposite Burton's Coriolanus. It was during this season that Burton and Bloom had begun an affair which continued

15 "Rossen's London Test: Will Then Make up Mind, C'scope Versus Vistavision," *Variety*, November 24, 1954, 7.

16 Cianfarra, "Alexander's Band," x5.

17 "Rossen reaches screen-filling heights with his battle assemblages, jamming the 2.55–1 anamorphic ratio to its very edges with scene after scene of mass warfare"—Brog., "Alexander, the Great," 6.

18 On *Alexander the Great* as a response to Rossen's persecution by HUAC, see Kim Shahabudin, "The Appearance of History: Robert Rossen's *Alexander the Great*." In *Responses to Oliver Stone's Alexander: Film, History, and Cultural Studies*, ed. Paul Cartledge and Fiona Rose Greenland (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 102–105.

19 Cianfarra, "Alexander's Band," x5.

onto the set of *Alexander*. A trip to Rome helped Rossen secure the services of Mario Nascimbene, the leading Italian film composer of his generation.²⁰

Given that so many of the key elements for film success (talented director and cast, sufficient budget, good production environment) were present, it is worth analysing why *Alexander the Great* failed and, in particular, what this might tell us about the cinematic reception of Alexander, and classical antiquity more generally. This is especially relevant given the fact that the most recent cinematic attempt to document the life of Alexander, Oliver Stone's *Alexander* (2004), also received a mixed critical reception.²¹ As we shall see, a number of the factors that were operational in the failure of Rossen's *Alexander the Great* also apply to Stone's film.

One of the greatest impediments for the success of Alexander on film is the fact that there are only a very few genres in which antiquity operates in cinema. As the above discussion of the cast's experience of playing antiquity illustrates, these films tend to be very formulaic. Historically, the most successful genre for the representation of antiquity has been the epic film.²² Traditionally, these films were set in Rome and featured handsome, young pagan converts falling in love with chaste, demure Christian girls and running afoul of despotic emperors and their vampy concubines. Excitement was added through scenes of battles and gladiatorial combat. Casts of thousands, monumental sets, and lavish, opulent palace scenes help turn these films into a spectacle.

It was firmly within this tradition of filmmaking that *Alexander the Great* was marketed. "From history's most thrilling pages comes the colossus who conquered the world, Alexander the Great" boasted the trailer which opened with chariots racing across the screen while trumpets blared and drums pounded in excitement. The rest of the trailer was equally prone to the hyperbole so typical of epic spectacle cinema: "Alexander, conqueror of conquerors whose ambition knew no bounds. Here are the loves, the glory, the legend of a man

20 "Rossen in Rome", *Variety*, January 18, 1956, 17.

21 For a discussion of the critical and popular reaction to Stone's *Alexander*, see Jon Solomon, "The Popular Reception of *Alexander*," in *Responses to Oliver Stone's Alexander: Film, History, and Cultural Studies*, eds Paul Cartledge and Fiona Rose Greensland (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 36–51.

22 For discussion of the nature of the epic film and its conventions for the representation of antiquity, see Alastair Blanshard and Kim Shahabudin, *Classics on Screen: Ancient Greece and Rome on Film* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011), 36–57. On the way in which *Alexander the Great* does not fit into this mould, see Shahabudin, "The Appearance of History", 95–98.

who thought he was a god ... The colossus who conquered the world now the colossus of motion pictures". In place of the wicked, depraved empresses of traditional epic, we now have Danielle Darrieux "as Olympias whose evil genius inspired hatred and murder". At no point in the trailer does the pace let up or the martial music stop. These messages were reinforced with print ads that promised the same type of experience. "Conqueror of Conquerors! Spectacle of Spectacles! The Colossus of All Motion Pictures!" they proclaimed. The colossus theme was picked up in the movie posters which show Alexander towering over scenes of battle and destruction. Tiny women throw themselves prostrate at his feet and cling to his calves. This style of marketing was continued by the international distributors of the film. So, for example, the *Times of India* in a piece published prior to the launch of the film gushes that *Alexander the Great* "is one of the most opulently mounted and spectacularly lavish pictures ever filmed". It continues in a similar vein praising the "magnificent Technicolor", the "sweeping CinemaScope", the "awe-inspiring" realism of the battles and concludes that the film "is a milestone in motion picture entertainment".²³ Within the African-American community, the film was marketed as a type of beefcake adventure film. An advertisement in the African-American-orientated *New York Amsterdam News* shows the Victoria theatre in Harlem advertising the film as part of a double-bill with a "Men's Muscle Contest", presumably spectators were encouraged to compare the physiques of Alexander and the Greeks with the bodies that entered the competition.²⁴ This focus on physicality and athleticism was also stressed by the decision to premiere the film at a benefit for the Southern California Olympic fund.²⁵

As Edwin Schallert noted in his review, the decision to premiere the film as an Olympic fundraiser produced a strange mix of values. It certainly was not the right film for the occasion. Rossen's film was no conventional epic. Rossen himself was unhappy about the nature of the film advertising. In an

23 "All-Star Cast Shine in 'Alexander' at Regal," *The Times of India*, August 8, 1957, 5.

24 *New York Amsterdam News*, May 26, 1956, p. 15. The focus on marketing specifically to the African-American community was a recent decision by Hollywood. United Artists had only appointed Mary Dammond, a person with expertise in the African-American press, a few months before the release of the film. *Alexander* was Dammond's first substantial project—"Hollywood Becomes Aware of the Power of the Negro Press," *Cleveland Call and Post*, June 2, 1956, 1c; "United Artists Appoints Tan Publicity Consultant," *Afro-American*, June 9, 1956, 16; "May Knickle Dammond Gets Publicity Post," *Atlanta Daily World*, September 11, 1956, 2.

25 Edwin Schallert, "Premiere of 'Alexander' Assumes Festive Character," *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1956, 32.

interview three years later, Rossen showed barely concealed distaste for the genre of spectacle and the way that it was marketed: "Any one who makes a spectacle for the sake of spectacle is kidding himself ... [there is a tendency] to oversell the big pictures. You can't fool the public any more".²⁶ Rossen then went on to discuss his disagreement with United Artists about the marketing of *Alexander the Great* and his annoyance that there was no concentration in the marketing "on what the story had to say".

Rossen's film does not play by the rules of epic cinema, but it is hard to imagine how exactly it ever could. Rossen's Alexander story—and it is tempting to say the story of Alexander generally—does not easily fit into the conventions for epic film. The first issue to note is chronological range. Where should one start the story of Alexander? Following Plutarch, the easiest place to start would be his birth. Yet popular films that gave a complete life story from birth to death were comparatively rare in the 1950s and 60s. The only cinematic models available for telling the story of a life were those developed for telling the story of Christ, which is to say that there were no suitable parallels at all. Some contemporaries may have seen Alexander's empire as laying the foundation for the unified world that would make the spread of Christianity possible, but Rossen's Alexander was no Christ figure.²⁷ Furthermore, starting with the birth of Alexander only complicates matters for the audience. One of the advantages that Rome has over Greece as a setting for film is that, for long stretches of its history, events and themes are well-known and easily sketched.²⁸ Cinema audiences were well versed in stories of despotic emperors and revolting slaves. It is striking that those periods which are less familiar and historically complicated—early Rome, bits of the late Republic not treated by Shakespeare, late antiquity—have tended to been avoided as the subjects of films.

Beginning with the birth of Alexander places the audience right in the midst of the one of the most complicated, and least canonical, periods of Greek

26 "Rossen Advocates Industry Subsidy for Development of Creative Talent," *Variety*, January 21, 1959, 21. Sadly, no copy survives of the TV film made by Rossen's daughter Carol as part of the publicity for the film ("Rossen's Daughter Does TV Pic for 'Alexander,'" *Variety*, July 20, 1955, 15). This presumably reflected more closely how Rossen wished to publicize the film.

27 "[Alexander's creation of an empire was] a task that is credited with starting the unification of Europe and Asia and paving the way for the spread of Christianity later"—Brog., "Alexander the Great," 6.

28 Gideon Nisbet, *Ancient Greece in Film and Popular Culture* (Bristol: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2006), 17.

history. Rossen does his best to assist the audience in locating themselves; a caption superimposed on the establishing shot tells audiences that “It is the year 356 BC In a troubled, exhausted, divided, bloody Greece ...”. Yet, note the ellipsis. On one level, it represents an incomplete sentence that will be completed by the subsequent cut-away shot of the figure of Aeschines shouting “war!”. On another level, it helps mark just how indeterminate our knowledge of events truly is. For any certainty that the audience would have had provided by the establishing shot is soon undercut. Immediately, we are plunged into a debate between Aeschines and Demosthenes and it is not clear whom we should believe. Rossen plays with cinematic convention by having Aeschines dressed in white, while Demosthenes, the figure who ultimately is proved right, is dressed in dark brown. For once, we are supposed to be cheering on the man in black. Much like the Athenian audience in the scene, the cinema audience needs to work hard to discern what is at stake in the debate about Olynthus, a city that is mentioned by name, but whose history and significance are never explained. Demosthenes’ speech in defence of Olynthus provides a voice-over for scenes of Philip burning an anonymous Greek city (presumably, but never positively identified as Olynthus) and helps underscore the idea that Philip is a figure that should concern us, but historical motivation remains a problem. The audience is left completely in the dark about why Philip is attacking Olynthus, why Athens is particularly concerned, or how any of this involves Alexander the Great.

It is not just the lack of historical reference points that makes this film difficult. A much bigger problem is the lack of any clear moral delineation in character. Rossen liked his characters flawed and compromised. Films such as *All the King’s Men*, *Body and Soul*, and *The Brave Bulls*, all featured leading male characters who were damaged or corrupted. Casty described the Rossen male archetype in the following terms:

Typically, Rossen’s searcher is a young man—often rootless or socially dispossessed—with a certain natural inner force, someone who cannot fully identify or control this energy, this source of grace and power. Under the shaping pressures of a corrupt society, his élan turns aggressive, perverse, destructive.²⁹

Such complex, multi-faceted characters fit uneasily into the template for epic films. Another one of the reasons why cinema has traditionally favoured films

29 Casty, *The Films of Robert Rossen*, 2.

set in Rome is that the presence of Christianity helps to provide a clear moral compass. It allows the films to pitch virtuous Christians against depraved pagans. Occasionally, characters lose their way, but this is normally solved by a conversion experience that puts them onto the right track, from which they never subsequently deviate. This presents a sharp contrast to Rossen's films where characters almost never escape their demons. They constantly battle them, sometimes winning, sometimes backsliding—matters are always precarious.

Alexander the Great is littered with these imperfect characters. The first half of the film explores the tortured relationship between Alexander and his father, Philip II. Neither character comes out well, but neither is entirely monstrous either. For all his flaws, Philip appears as a figure more to be pitied than hated. The first time we encounter him, we see Philip fitfully asleep unable to enjoy his military victories while his rest is disturbed by sinister dreams. The announcement that his wife Olympias has borne him a son only seems to bring anxiety rather than joy. The scene then shifts to his palace at Pella and we soon learn about the loveless marriage that he endures with his wife Olympias. The first time we see the two characters together, Olympias visibly recoils from Philip's touch. Distrust between the two has reached such a pitch that Philip is not even certain that the child is his. There is a suggestion (reflecting an account in the *Alexander Romance*) that the child may be the product of an illicit affair with a visiting Egyptian priest.³⁰ Initially minded to kill the infant Alexander, Philip eventually decides to recognize him as his son. Yet, it is a decision that brings him little happiness. He and Olympias remain estranged.

Throughout the film, Philip remains a tortured character. He both loves and is shown to be increasingly jealous of his son. His victories give him no peace. His conquest of Greece climaxes with his defeat of the Athenian and Theban forces at the Battle of Chaeronea. However, Philip is not able to fully enjoy his victory. During the course of the battle, he is knocked off his horse and needs to be rescued by Alexander, an event that diminishes Philip's martial achievement. Moreover, his victory does nothing to assuage the great anxiety that haunts Philip, namely that despite all his marvellous achievements the world still regards him as an ill-bred barbarian. Philip, it turns out, just wants to be loved and respected. His conquests are driven less by love of glory than by this deep-seated insecurity. Mad and drunk, Philip wanders amongst the corpses of the battlefield challenging imaginary opponents to declare him

30 For a discussion of the sources for this account as well as Rossen's familiarity with them, see Shahabudin, "The Appearance of History," 99–101.

a “barbarian”. Reviewers regarded this scene as one of the most historically accurate in the movie.³¹ Certainly, our ancient accounts depict Philip revelling after the battle.³² Nevertheless, there is a significant difference. In the ancient sources, this episode of Philip’s drunken wanderings is used to demonstrate his depravity.³³ Here, Rossen makes the scene one of *pathos*. Our heart goes out to the conqueror who like a deranged invalid must be escorted to his bed by his son.

Like his father, Alexander is shown to be morally compromised. When Philip is knocked off his horse, he does not rush immediately to his father’s aid. Instead, he pauses, weighing up the possibility of letting Philip die. When Philip is assassinated, Alexander covers up his mother’s involvement in the plot to murder Philip, first murdering Pausanias, depicted as one of Alexander’s dear friends, and then shifting the blame, accusing instead Demosthenes and sinister Persian forces. In the aftermath of Philip’s death, he organizes for his opponents to be stoned to death and he allows Olympias to go unpunished when she strangles to death Eurydice, one of Philip’s other wives, and burns Eurydice’s infant child alive. Even the story of Alexander splitting the Gordian knot takes on a sinister, programmatic form. Rather than a symbol of ingenuity, it becomes a symbol of Alexander’s ruthlessness and indifference to any other way but the most expedient.

Alexander’s military conquests are similarly morally compromised in this film. Justifying the invasion of Persia proves problematic in the film. None of the explanations provided by the film seem adequate. After the combined effect of two World Wars, such acts of aggression were a hard sell in the mid-to-late twentieth century and Rossen does not shy away from the difficulties implicit in Alexander’s attack on the Persian Empire. In a particularly troubling scene, Aristotle gives a justification for Greek superiority and the rightness of invasion:

We Greeks are the chosen, the elect. Our culture is the best. Our civilisation is the best. Our men are the best. All others are barbarians and it is our moral duty to conquer them, enslave them, and, if necessary, destroy

31 Freedgood, “Alexander’s Researcher,” 156.

32 Accounts of Philip’s drunken revel after Chaeronea are found in Diodorus (16.87.1), Plutarch (*Dem.* 20.3) and Theopompus (*FGrH* F236 = Athen. 10.435b–c).

33 For discussion, see Frances Pownall, “The Symposia of Philip II and Alexander III of Macedon: The View from Greece.” In *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*, ed. Elizabeth Carney and Daniel Ogden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 56–58.

them ... Wonders are many, but none is more wonderful than man himself. The Persian way of life has the seed of death and fear in it, the Greek of life and courage. The gods of the Greeks are made in the image of man, not men with bird's heads or bulls with lion's heads, but men who can be understood and felt.

The words are delivered by Aristotle initially straight to camera before fading into a montage of Greek athletes and warriors performing exercises in an outdoor gymnasium. The scene ends with Alexander reading out a grisly description of Achilles' chariot trampling over corpses, its axels stained with blood.³⁴ It is clear where Aristotle's words lead—death and gore. It is an unsettling sequence. Aristotle's vision is delivered with an intensity that borders on the fanatical and has a distinctly totalitarian feel. A feeling that is only intensified by the montage scene in the athletic gymnasium which in many ways visually echoes Mussolini's *Foro Italico*.³⁵

Alexander's invasion of Persia proves to be a work-in-progress. Over the course of the film, two different visions of the campaign struggle for supremacy. In the first, Alexander's conquest of Persia is nothing more than a vain pursuit of glory, an expedition driven by a monstrous child's desire to escape the shadow of an overbearing father. In the second, the Persian invasion is seen as a first step in creating a new, better, unified world; it is the cleansing away of an empire that is "old and corrupt and begs destruction" (as Barsine describes Persia as she and Memnon debate Alexander's motives before the battle of Granicus). Both these visions compete with each other. Sometimes, the base vision is in the ascendancy and Alexander behaves like a tyrant, refusing to offer his opponents mercy. At other points, the more noble vision comes into view. A turning point occurs at the battle for Miletus where Alexander, pressured on all sides by his advisors, has a cathartic breakdown and in the process finally seems to have exorcized his guilt over his treatment of his father. In the immediate aftermath of Miletus, we see a kinder, gentler, more noble Alexander emerge. However, this figure is not entirely free of his self-destructive tendencies. Both the burning of Babylon and the murder of Cleitus show that the tyrannical side of Alexander is never far from the surface. Ultimately, the death of Cleitus and

34 Alexander reads from the end of book 20 of the *Iliad* using E. Myers' translation from the Lang, Leaf, and Myers' translation of 1882. This translation proved to one of the most popular of the translations of the *Iliad* and went through numerous reprints and republications.

35 Nisbet, *Ancient Greece in Film and Popular Culture*, 98–99 notes the similarity with Mussolini's outdoor complex, but regards the similarity as accidental.

Alexander's profound remorse at his actions strengthens Alexander's resolve to the point where he can firmly commit to making his conquest a noble endeavour and the film ends with the wedding of Greeks and Persians at Susa and shortly after this Alexander's death.

Even the most obviously wicked character in the film, Olympias (played by the French actress Danielle Darrieux) is shown not to be all bad. It is her love and desire to safeguard the destiny of her son that drives her to so many acts of cruelty. Her crimes are not so much the result of an evil nature as the fact that Olympias is an outsider in Macedonian society. The mistake was to bring her from Epirus to Pella. "You knew what she was when you married her. Proud and jealous, wild and as strange as the mountains from which she came and the strange Gods which she worshiped", remarks one of Philip's confidants to the king. Pre-publicity for the film described Olympias as a "weird visionary".³⁶

Throughout the film, the scenery is visually stimulating, but certainly not the most opulent that Hollywood ever produced. Often the desire for a seeming historical authenticity impeded the grandeur of the shot. Take, for example, the scene of Philip returning to Pella with his victorious army. Such sequences of triumph were a staple of epic film. Populated by huge numbers of extras, they offered rich scenes of martial power as the camera looked down on the scene of an army that seem to stretch back in the distance to infinity. Rossen deliberately eschews such conventions. Preferring to stress the hilly-nature of Greek citadels means that when Philip returns to Pella (paradoxically not a particularly steep site), his triumphant army is forced to march up hill. They struggle encumbered by their armour and other baggage. It is impossible to get the vista shots one normally sees on such occasions. One pities the girls carrying garlands as they run up the steep slope and then are required to tackle an even steeper flight of stairs. Rather than a scene of opulence, everything looks like a hard work. A similar austerity infects the decoration of Philip's palace, which is primarily constructed out of slabs of dull grey stone and often surprisingly low ceilings. The technical advisor to the film was Prince Peter of Greece. It was odd choice: Peter was a trained anthropologist, not an archaeologist and he populated the sets of the film with a mish-mash of clichéd Greek artefacts. The *mise-en-scène* shows no respect for historical accuracy. At Pella, Etruscan wall-paintings jostle with masterpieces of classical art (Myron's *Discobolos*, Lysippus' *Apoxyomenos*, the *Venus Genetrix*). A normally tiny Orientalizing Corinthian *alabastron* is scaled up to over a metre-tall and placed in a

36 "U.S. Film Role Goes to Mlle. Darrieux," *The New York Times*, January 27, 1955, 17.

corner. Banqueters drink from 7th-century griffin-headed jugs and boar's head *rhytons*. For all its pretensions to historical accuracy, the film constantly falls down in the details.

If contemporary audiences were confused and disappointed by the lack of clear moral direction in Alexander's life and campaign, they were equally disappointed by his lack of intense emotional life. Unlike other epic films, *Alexander the Great* offers the audience no great love story. This is one of the central problems with making films about Alexander. Spectacle needs romance. Who is the great love of Alexander's life? The problem with Alexander is that there are too many candidates. Directors end up having to pick one and then do their best to excise or minimize the others. Oliver Stone plumps for Roxane. Rossen flirts with Eurydice, the young wife of Philip II, before deciding on Barsine. The problem is that historically it is impossible to keep the same woman in play throughout the course of the campaign. Moments of romance in the Alexander story tend to intermittent, brief, and unsatisfying. Some of Alexander's loves are so brief that they disappear almost completely, captured only in stray anecdotes like his love for Pancaspe (Campaspe), a courtesan from Larissa.³⁷ Of course, the one romantic figure who could provide a constant presence in the film is the one that Rossen was never able to show, namely Alexander's beloved Hephaestion.³⁸ Cold War masculinity felt particularly threatened by homosexuality and there is no hint of a special relationship between Alexander and Hephaestion.³⁹ Indeed, even trying to work out which of the characters in Alexander's retinue is supposed to be Hephaestion proves difficult. As one reviewer noted, curiously the young men that surround Alexander are "never individually defined".⁴⁰ By the end of the film, it is still unclear who is who. We can only identify Cleitus because he's dead.

37 On Pancaspe (alternatively Pancaste), see Aelian, *Historical Miscellany* 12.34; Pliny, *Natural History* 35.86–87.

38 On the tradition, both ancient and modern, about Hephaestion, see Jeanne Reames, "The Cult of Hephaestion," In *Responses to Oliver Stone's Alexander: Film, History, and Cultural Studies*, ed. Paul Cartledge and Fiona Rose Greenland (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 183–216.

39 On the suppressed eroticism in *Alexander the Great* as well as McCarthyite concerns about sexual and gender order, see Dustin Gann, "Soldiers and Spies: Shifts in American Motion Picture Masculinities," (MA diss. Emporia State University, 2006), 18.

40 Richard L. Coe "Real History in 'Alexander'," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 31, 1956, 43.

Ultimately, the problem with *Alexander the Great* may prove to be one of register. There is something about the Alexander story that will not permit it to be just a light moment of afternoon's entertainment. Tellingly the reviewer of the film for the *Manchester Guardian* entitled his review "'Alexander the Great' is Too Big".⁴¹ In the course of the review, he wondered whether it would have been "better to deal with just one episode or two from the great man's life than to try to deal with the whole of it". It is an astute observation. The small, but telling episode has never been a cinematic strategy for representing Alexander. In this, film stands in contrast with other genres of the visual arts such as painting which have been happy to represent key moments (the arrival into Babylon, encountering the family of Darius etc.) as a synecdoche for the conqueror's life story. In contrast, film has always felt that it needed to produce a product as great and as monumental as the man himself. In discussing Rossen's film and the cinematic treatment of history, the reviewer Richard Coe declared that there were "two schools of conduct in filming an historical epoch. Probably 99 per cent are devoted to yucking up some incident of which every schoolboy's heard and passing it off as the McCoy. Quite clearly, Robert Rossen, producer, director and writer of this spectacular labor determined on the minority school". The question we need to consider is whether this turn away from light entertainment (why can't Alexander be "yucked up"?) towards serious, historical drama is a function of Rossen's own sensibilities or a response that emerges out of attempting to engage with the weight of the Alexander tradition.

Given the lack of light entertainment produced about Alexander either before or since Rossen, it is tempting to see this as a function of the Alexander narrative itself. Some confirmation of this is provided by the fact that not all the ponderousness of *Alexander the Great* emerges from fidelity to the historical account. Much is imported. *Gravitas* has gravity. So, for example, the actors speak in a deliberately archaizing cadence and syntax, more reminiscent of Shakespeare than contemporary speech. Lejeune in his review compared the feel of the film to a production of *Henry V*.⁴² "Mr. Burton's Alexander is no tremendous conqueror of history, but a strong sound decent piece of Old Vic acting", he continues. The Myers translation of the *Iliad* that Alexander reads from in the scene discussed earlier is also deliberately old fashioned. In the introduction to the 1915 edition of the translation, G.R. Carpenter described the

41 [Our London Film Critic], "'Alexander the Great' Is Too Big: Mr. Rossen's Honourable Attempt," *The Manchester Guardian*, March 24, 1956, 5.

42 Lejeune "Alexander and Co.", 15.

translation as “simple but dignified; it has a touch of the archaic that reminds us of the Bible and Shakespeare and gives us a sense of reading an ancient classic”.⁴³ These constant comparisons with Shakespeare point to a deeper truth. Alexander struggles to translate to cinema because he lacks a definitive moment of mediation. Unlike Caesar or Cleopatra, there is no Shakespeare to firmly set him into Western culture—and we constantly try to fill the gap. With Alexander, one is, in many important ways, forced to start at the beginning (literally in the case of film). This gives great freedom to artistic re-imaginings, but it comes at a price. It makes him difficult fodder for genres, such as popular film, which rely heavily on visual and dramatic conventions to engage with audiences and propel their storylines.⁴⁴ Alexander eludes cliché—and that is his and Rossen’s greatest problem.

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43 Andrew Lang, Walter Leaf, and Ernest Myers. *The Iliad of Homer* (Chautauqua: Macmillan, 1905), ix.

44 One of the earliest, and still the best, discussions of these conventions for the representation of antiquity in cinema is Roland Barthes’ 1957 essay “The Romans in Films” published in *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 26–28.

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Go East, Young Man: Adventuring in the Spirit of Alexander

Margaret E. Butler

Fond as he was of geography, Alexander, I thought, would like the ardour with which I was toiling in his footsteps, asking questions in a small way in a manner he would understand: for he cared for such things.

Freya Stark, 1958, *Alexander's Path*¹



Already a legend in his own time, Alexander the Great's campaigns extended over an estimated 35,000 kilometres, traversed throughout a ten-year period, stretching across territory from the Balkans down to Egypt and all the way to modern-day Pakistan. These journeys are an integral part of the *Alexander Romance*, the collection of legendary tales about Alexander's near superhuman adventures and achievements. The oldest Greek version of the *Alexander Romance* dates to the third century CE and draws on third-century BCE material attributed to Pseudo-Callisthenes. From Alexander's own time until the present day, explorers, armchair adventurers, military men, and merchants have been fascinated with this romanticized quest to make known lands yet unknown to Alexander and his men, not to rest until he had reached the ends of the earth, driven by his *pothos* or "yearning" to achieve the greatest, most difficult, most impressive, seemingly impossible feats. Many have tried to stand in Alexander's footsteps and replicate his travels. With copies of Arrian and Curtius Rufus in their hands, they have retraced his path in the mountains and the desert, searched for citadels he besieged, and stumbled upon what they believed to be lost tribes of the descendants of Alexander's men.

1 Freya Stark, *Alexander's Path: A Travel Memoir* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, [1958] 1990), 143–144.

These are not easy journeys. Far from the pleasant—or even mildly off-track—day trips that many history enthusiasts take when they have the opportunity to travel in areas of interest, these expeditions require significant investments of time and resources. They can be very risky because of the terrain and climate, the threat of violent crime, and the given region's political instability, and they often come at a considerable cost to aspects of the personal lives of the travellers. Intellectual, financial, and emotional needs often contribute to the decisions of many of these men and women in committing to these adventures. Sometimes they find themselves already near Alexander's path for business reasons and decide to investigate further. Many are directors of archaeological, journalistic, or documentary projects, and some have more expert knowledge of the area because of military postings. The background circumstances vary widely.

The possibility of running into bandits, digging Jeeps out of desert sands, sitting around campfires in rural Afghanistan as Alexander might have done with his men, trudging through knee-deep snow in the Hindu Kush—rather than being inconveniences or frightening episodes, often these are presented as the most treasured moments of these travellers' journeys. The choice to undertake such extreme adventures is an interesting one, and here we look at some of the men and women who have decided that they needed this challenge in their lives. My intent is not to play psychologist but rather to give an overview of some of the major travellers who have followed in Alexander's footsteps and to look at their own reflections on their adventures and their affinity for the same spirit of discovery and drive that led Alexander to what for him was the ends of the earth.

The Legend and the Drive

... at twenty-five, having conquered all the world that was known to him, he went forth to conquer the lands he did not know.

RICHARD HALLIBURTON, 1932, *The Flying Carpet*²

Tales about Alexander's campaigns and travels developed during his lifetime; fact was mixed with fantasy from the beginning, in part because Alexander promoted himself as a larger-than-life figure, traveling, as both Peter Green and

² Richard Halliburton, *The Flying Carpet: Adventures in a Biplane from Timbuctoo to Everest and Beyond* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, [1932] 2012), 187.

W.J. Aerts point out, with a propaganda “machine”, complete with scientists, mathematicians, and architects and an “official” campaign historian.³ Callisthenes travelled with Alexander as the “official” campaign historian, while the generals Ptolemy and Nearchus also wrote accounts of the campaigns; sadly, these have not survived themselves but were used as sources by Arrian and other historians.⁴ These accounts would have contributed to Alexander’s legendary status, as would have the reports coming back from his soldiers wishing to aggrandize to family and friends their exploits on the campaigns.

During ten years of campaigning, covering as many as 4,000 kilometres a year, Alexander and his men conquered gruelling terrain, chronicled and mapped new lands, subdued hostile populations and integrated both them and those that were indifferent or even welcoming, won battles, and laid the foundations of an empire. Alexander appeals to the imagination, and regardless of century, “traveling by ‘book’ had the same fascination for [the peoples of the ancient Mediterranean] as films about foreign countries or moonscapes for us”.⁵ From these early contemporary or near-contemporary stories comes the literary tradition we call the *Alexander Romance*.⁶ Alexander Romance literature stretches far and wide throughout many centuries; just to illustrate its extent, it appears even in Mongolian literature, and there is a Bulgarian version written as late as 1810.⁷

3 Peter Green, *Alexander of Macedon, 356–323 BC: A Historical Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 160–165. See p. 32 in W.J. Aerts, “Alexander the Great and Ancient Travel Stories”, in *Travel Fact and Travel Fiction: Studies on Fiction, Literary Tradition, Scholarly Discovery, and Observation in Travel Writing*, ed. Zweder Von Martels (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 30–38.

4 Callisthenes’ account grew more critical of Alexander’s actions over time, and he fell out of favour.

5 Aerts, “Ancient Travel Stories”, 38.

6 The Alexander Romance story coalesces as early as the third century BCE, under the author we call Pseudo-Callisthenes, but the earliest extant Greek text dates c. 300 CE. Aerts (“Ancient Travel Stories”, 36) calls Lucian’s *Verae Historiae* a proto-Alexander Romance, perhaps with a touch of mockery, perhaps with a nod to science-fiction—“The hero of the Alexander Romance could tread in the footsteps of his ancestor Heracles and settle with monsters” (“Ancient Travel Stories”, 38).

7 Francis Woodman Cleaves, “An Early Mongolian Version of The Alexander Romance”, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 22 (1959): 1–99; Lûbomir Miletić, *Една българска Александрия отъ 1810 год*, Vol. XIII, Български старини (Sofia: българска Академия на наукитъ, 1936), 48. For commonalities underlying the basic structure of many versions of the Alexander Romance, see Alan E. Samuel, “The Earliest Elements in the Alexander Romance”, *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 35.4 (1986): 427–437, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4435981>; Jeremy Mcin-

Biographers and historians have found it difficult to come with purely strategic reasons that Alexander would have wanted to push on past the Indus River into India. As Peter Green notes, “His main impulse, however, seems to have been sheer curiosity, a *pothos* for the unknown, coupled with his determination to achieve world-domination in the fullest sense. When he stood by the furthest shore of Ocean, that ambition would be fulfilled.”⁸ In the histories we have (Diodorus Siculus, Curtius Rufus, Plutarch, Arrian) and in the *Romances*, Alexander is portrayed as a figure driven or struck by *πόθος*—the desire to see, visit, or seize places both known unknown.⁹ In Arrian (*Anab.* 1.3.5, 2.3.1, 3.3.1, 4.28.4, 5.2.5) it is *πόθος*, and in Curtius Rufus (4.7.8, 4.8.3, 7.11.4) he is struck with *cupido*, including the desire to rule over all of Asia (3.1.16) and, that which perhaps he sought most of all, *cupido famae* (9.2.9). In Strabo (7.1.4) we hear about Alexander’s desire to go beyond to the unknown. It is with Alexander’s sense of *pothos* that the truly adventurous travellers seem to have identified over the years. What the specific desire is varies by traveller—desire for self-knowledge, recognition, adventure, curiosity, or for filling a void in one’s personal life. They justify their journeys to themselves in different ways, but all share an admiration for Alexander’s vision and drive and a deep regret for his untimely ending and what could have been.

erney, “Arrian and the Greek Alexander Romance”, *Classical World* 100.4 (2007): 424–430. For development of the Alexander Romance over time and in just a few different parts of the world, see W.J. Aerts, Joseph M.M. Hermans, and Elizabeth Visser, *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages: Ten Studies on the Last Days of Alexander in Literary and Historical Writing: Symposium Interfacultaire Werkgroep Mediaevistiek, Groningen 12–15 October 1977* (Nijmegen: Alfa, 1978); J.A. Boyle, *Alexander Romance in the East and West*, Vol. 60, *Bulletin of The John Rylands University Library Of Manchester* (Manchester: John Rylands University, 1978); Martin Gosman, *La légende d'Alexandre le Grand dans la littérature française du 12^e siècle: une réécriture permanente* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997); Peter Kotar, *Der syrische Alexanderroman: eine Untersuchung über die Beziehungen des syrischen zum griechischen Alexanderroman des Pseudo-Kallisthenes* (Hamburg: Kovac, 2013); Richard Stoneman, Ian Richard Netton, and Kyle Erickson, *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East* (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing, 2012); Z. David Zuwiyya, *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). The tradition of the Alexander Romance extends also into Jewish literature and Egyptian literature, among others; the list is extensive. See chapters 20 and 21 of this volume.

8 Green, *Alexander of Macedon*, 128, 380.

9 See Victor Ehrenberg, “Pothos”, in *Alexander the Great: The Main Problems*, ed. G.T. Griffith (Cambridge: Heffer, 1966), 74–83.

Heirs of Spirit: The Travellers

I set no limits of labor to a man of spirit ... save only that the labors themselves lead on to noble enterprises ... It is a lovely thing to live with courage, and to die, leaving behind an everlasting renown.

ARR. *Anab.* 5.26.4, quoted by HELEN and FRANK SCHREIDER in 1968, "In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great"

Who attempts to walk in "the footsteps of Alexander?" Currently there are numerous tourist opportunities to visit some of the more well-worn, easily accessible routes. Peter Sommer, a documentarian who himself has retraced 3,200 kilometres of Alexander's route in Turkey, runs a successful tour company enabling travellers to see the sites mentioned in the history books, accompanied by some insightful and educated narration, logistical support, and in a reasonable amount of comfort.¹⁰ Even some of the sites less trafficked by international travellers, like those in Pakistan, now are promoted as tourist destinations. Pakistan's official government tourist website capitalizes on the past as it invites visitors to see the Kalash Kafirs—the possible descendants of Alexander's soldiers—in the Brumboret and Rumbur Valleys.¹¹ Additionally, Skopje's (the capital of FYROM) international airport is named after Alexander the Great, while in Greece, you can run the International Alexander the Great Marathon.¹² Egypt is less hasty to capitalize on Alexander's legacy, but they have more to offer than Pakistan and Afghanistan and no stake in the Macedonia name battle.

10 Peter Sommer Travels, accessed April 01, 2017, <http://www.petersommer.com/>. Sommer worked on the Turkey portion of the BBC Series *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great* with Michael Wood (David Wallace and Michael Wood, *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great*, (London: Maya Vision International for BBC/2 Entertain, 2010); the series aired originally on the BBC in 1998).

11 All information accessed on April 01, 2017 and verified as the same information as at the time of research/writing: <http://tourism.kp.gov.pk/page/kalash>; http://tourism.kp.gov.pk/page/chitral_1_1/page_type/location; <http://tourism.kp.gov.pk/page/swat>; http://www.tourism.gov.pk/taxila_punjab.html; http://www.tourism.gov.pk/northern_areas.html. There even is tourism in Afghanistan promoting Alexander's route: <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:ZqrFSGiqzGoJ:mfa.gov.af/en/page/about-afghanistan/tourism-in-afghanistan+&cd=6&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=safari> (please note the website is unstable, and readers may have to view to access a cached version of the page; the version I accessed was on 02 November, 2016).

12 All information accessed on April 01, 2017 and verified as the same information as at the time of research/writing: <http://www.macedoniaexperience.com/culture-leisure/tour-of-ancient-macedonia>; <http://www.atgm.gr/index.php/en/>.

While the average tourist is happy to stand where Alexander stood, he or she, quite understandably, is equally happy to do it under more comfortable circumstances. Some of Peter Sommer's clients say of their tour, "We never had to carry our suitcases even an inch!", "no cares or worries, just time to enjoy and soak it all up", "perfect combination of culture and relaxation", and "came back refreshed and relaxed ... and much better informed."¹³ Even the more adventurous on the academic side, however, those who would not be seen anywhere near a commercial tour, usually are inclined to stick to the safer, more accessible, more hospitable, more pleasant parts of Alexander's route. To follow Alexander just for the sake of following Alexander, to stick exactly to his route despite seriously challenging terrain, or to search for weeks or months in bandit-filled territory for the site of a particular geographical feature mentioned in Arrian, is commitment to *pothos* at another level.

The Expeditionaries

"It is difficult to describe the enthusiasm one feels on first beholding the scenes which have exercised the genius of Alexander. That hero has reaped the immortality which he so much desired, and transmitted the history of his conquests, allied with his name, to posterity."

ALEXANDER BURNS, 1834, *Voyage on the Indus*¹⁴

Nineteenth-century British imperialism and the Classical education that many of the administrative officials and military officers received ushered in the start of a wave of expeditions to trace Alexander's campaigns through the territories located in modern Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. Phiroze Vasunia's excellent account of the British in colonial India covers some of the many Victorian officers and officials who believed they were taking up where Alexander had left off in subduing and civilizing the East.¹⁵ Men such as the intelligence officer

13 Peter Sommer Travels, accessed April 01, 2017, <http://www.petersommer.com/testimonials/>.

14 Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara: being the account of a journey from India to Cabool, Tartary, and Persia, also narrative of a voyage on the Indus, from the sea to Lahore, 1831–1833*, 3 vols. (London: Murray, 1834), 15.

15 Phiroze Vasunia, *The Classics and Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 33–89. See also Warwick Ball, "Some Talk of Alexander: Myth and Politics in the North-West Frontier of British India", in Stoneman et al., 127–158. Ball directs the reader to Pierre Briant's *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*, transl. Peter T. Daniels

Arthur Conolly, often working for the British East India Company, carried their copies of Arrian, Curtius Rufus, and Strabo, left over from their school days, and scouted the geography of regions relatively unknown to the British, sometimes ending up, as in Conolly's case, killed or executed for their efforts in remote locations.¹⁶ What they wanted, for the most part, was to understand Alexander and his achievements by being on the ground, walking in his footsteps, becoming "little Alexanders" themselves, for the greater glory of the British Empire. Far from being critical of Alexander for his weaknesses, these men, many of them wanderers and outliers, wanted to see some of Alexander in themselves and achieve the "immortality" of becoming legends.

From 1831–1833, the Scotsman Alexander "Sikunder" Burns, "under the orders of the supreme government of India" and "with presents from the king of Great Britain", travelled up the Indus River to Lahore to survey the territory and gather intelligence for the British East India Company. A skilled linguist and translator, he had been charged with delivering a gift of horses from the British crown to the Maharaja of Punjab. After doing so, he continued on, as a sort of undercover agent, through the Hindu Kush to what now is modern Uzbekistan and then beyond to Persia.¹⁷

(Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), first published as *Histoire de l'empire perse: De Cyrus à Alexandre* (Librairie Arthème Fayard, Paris, 1996).

- 16 Jonathan L. Lee, *The 'Ancient Supremacy': Bukhara, Afghanistan and the Battle for Balkh, 1731–1901* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 74–78; Ball, "Some Talk of Alexander", 134; Arthur Conolly, *Journey to the North of India, Overland from England, through Russia, Persia and Affghaunistaun*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1834). I cannot cover but a few of these fascinating characters here, but for an excellent and comprehensive discussion of the wave of second Alexanders in colonial British India, see Vasunia's first chapter, "Dreams of Alexander." See also Martin J. Bayly, *Taming the Imperial Imagination Colonial Knowledge, International Relations, and the Anglo-Afghan Encounter, 1808–1878*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 54–55; Bernard S. Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India", in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 165–209; Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha International, 1992), 564; Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac, *Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 704. By looking at the British Library's catalogue entries for searches for "Alexander the Great" between 1700 and 1950, Warwick Ball gives a fascinating look at the uses and abuses of Alexander in British imperialism (Ball, "Some Talk of Alexander", 143).
- 17 Burns, *Travels into Bokhara*; Craig Murray, *Sikunder Burnes: Master of the Great Game* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2016).

In *A Voyage on the Indus*, Burns devotes a great deal of his narrative to tracing Alexander's route and reflecting on what Alexander (whom, in *Travels into Bokhara*, he calls, affectionately, the "Macedonian madman") would have been doing in any given spot.¹⁸ With false modesty, he tells the reader about getting his nickname: "As may be supposed, there were no bounds to their flattery, and we were daily informed that we were the "second Alexander," the "Sikunder sanee", for having achieved so dangerous a voyage as the Indus."¹⁹ Not wanting to be outdone by the original Alexander, Burns makes sure the reader know just how daring his exploits were:

My success in this undertaking, which was attended with many difficulties, and the sight of so many tribes hitherto little known, gave fresh strength to a desire that I had always felt to see new countries, and visit the conquests of Alexander. As the first European of modern times who had navigated the Indus, I now found myself stimulated to extend my journey beyond that river—the scene of romantic achievements which I had read of in early youth with the most intense interest ... The hazardous nature of the expedition, and the mode in which it could be best accomplished, required consideration. It would have been objectionable, and highly imprudent, to have entered the countries lying between India and Europe, as I had voyaged on the Indus, an accredited agent; and I was directed to appear (which I myself had suggested) as a private individual.²⁰

Although he returned safely from these adventures, like Alexander, he died a young man at the age of thirty-six. Burns returned to a posting in Kabul, where he was assassinated in 1841 by an angry mob of locals wielding knives.²¹

Josiah Harlan was an American who, in 1824, signed up to work as a surgeon for the British East India Company, first in Burma, then India, then in modern Afghanistan and Pakistan. He was self-taught but had a solid background in ancient history.²² In 1829 he travelled to Lahore and began working for the Maharaja of Punjab.²³ He served as governor of some of the maharaja's

18 Burns, *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. 1, 6.

19 Burns, *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. 3 (*A Voyage on the Indus*), 136–137.

20 Burns, *Travels into Bokhara*, preface, ix–x.

21 Murray, *Sikunder Burnes*, chapter 36.

22 Ben Macintyre, *Josiah the Great: The True Story of the Man Who Would Be King* (London: HarperPress, 2011), chapter 1.

23 Macintyre, *Josiah the Great*, chapters 9 and 10.

provinces before leading an expedition across the Hindu Kush mountains to depose a slave trader and warlord. His company included 4,000 men, horses, camels, and even an elephant. Armed with a US flag, he styled himself as a modern Alexander the Great representing a civilizing American and Western presence in barbarous lands, perhaps, according to one missionary, with the intent to make himself “king of Afghanistan”.²⁴ When he reached the province of Ghor in Afghanistan, he befriended the local prince, who, according to Harlan, was impressed with his disciplined forces. The prince made a deal—if Harlan would train his men in the Western style, he would make Harlan the Prince of Ghor. Harlan accepted.²⁵ After training the former prince’s men, Harlan returned to Kabul, leaving behind the former prince as his vizier. Far from welcoming him as a conquering hero, the British, who were on their way to seize Kabul themselves, were horrified and had no intent of letting Harlan claim dominion over any part of Afghanistan.²⁶ Harlan became Kipling’s inspiration for his 1888 story *The Man Who Would Be King*, a tale about two men who find a civilization with the descendants of Alexander the Great and become kings themselves by pretending they are the demi-god sons of Alexander, until their mortality is revealed.²⁷

James Lewis, better known as Charles Masson, was a British soldier, archaeologist, collector, explorer, and intelligence agent who worked for the British East India Company’s army before deserting in 1827. He took up briefly with Josiah Harlan, marching with him for a short time in Afghanistan before setting out on his own again.²⁸ Having remade himself as the American Charles Masson, he got the sponsorship of the East India Company for archaeological work in Iran and Afghanistan.²⁹ He was an especially fine numismatist and is credited with confirming the location of Alexandria of the Caucasus, founded by

24 Macintyre, *Josiah the Great*, 33.

25 Macintyre, *Josiah the Great*, chapters 11 and 12.

26 Macintyre, *Josiah the Great*, 235–240.

27 Rudyard Kipling, “The Man Who Would Be King”, in *The Man Who Would Be King and other stories* (New York: Dodge Publishing Company, [1888] 1890), 7–64. See also Vasunia, *The Classics and Colonial India*, 77–89. For Harlan’s own account of his adventures, see Josiah Harlan, *A Memoir of India and Avghanistaun, with Observations on the Present Exciting and Critical State and Future Prospects of Those Countries. Comprising Remarks on the Massacre of the British Army in Cabul* (Philadelphia: J. Dobson, 1842).

28 Bijan Omrani, “Charles Masson of Afghanistan: Deserter, Scholar, Spy”, *Asian Affairs* 39.2 (2008): 199–216, doi:10.1080/03068370802019075.

29 Charles Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan, the Panjab, & Kalât, During a Residence in Those Countries: To which Is Added an Account of the Insurrection at Kalat, and a Memoir on Eastern Balochistan*, 4 vols. (London: Richard

Alexander in the foothills of the Hindu Kush mountains north of Kabul. When able to consult his Arrian, Curtius Rufus, Diodorus Siculus, and Plutarch, his Classical training helped him in his archaeological surveys and work.³⁰ Eventually his real identity was discovered, but because of his valuable knowledge and outstanding achievements, he was pardoned in exchange for intelligence on the region.³¹

Masson was somewhat obsessed with Alexander Burnes, commenting frequently on his actions, and in the preface to the published narrative of his journeys, made this peculiar notation:

The late Sir Alexander Burnes, in a letter of 9th March, 1936, wrote to me:—"For some years past, I have often crossed your path and I have never done so without finding the impression which I had imbibed regarding your talents, your honour, and your zeal strengthened." I quote this passage merely to show that while Sir Alexander could privately acknowledge that he had "often crossed my path, &c.", he found it inconvenient as regarded his pretensions publicly to avow so much; and I am in possession of a letter from England, informing me that my papers were considered valuable at the India House, as "corroborating the accuracy of Captain Burnes' statements." It will be seen that I was guiltless of the wild projects which would seem from the first to have possessed the mind of that unfortunate officer, and which he was mainly instrumental in forcing the Government to attempt, however notoriously the results have been disastrous to it and fatal to himself.³²

Evidently competition among heirs of Alexander never dies.

Bentley, 1844); Charles Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan, and the Panjab: Including a Residence in Those Countries from 1826 to 1838*, (London: Richard Bentley, 1842).

30 Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys*, vol. 1, 402.

31 Vasunia, *The Classics and Colonial India*, 69; Gordon Whitteridge, *Charles Masson of Afghanistan* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1986); Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis and Elizabeth Errington, *From Persepolis to the Punjab Exploring the past in Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan* (London: British Museum Press, 2011), 11. See also E. Richardson, "Mr Masson and the lost cities: a Victorian journey to the edges of remembrance", *Classical Receptions Journal* 5.1 (2012): 84–105, doi:10.1093/crj/clso08; Pierre Briant, *Alexander the Great and His Empire: A Short Introduction*, transl. Amélie Kuhrt (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), first published as *Alexandre le Grand* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1974).

32 Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys*, vol. 1, preface, v–vi.

The Scholar

But even from the glorious height of my beloved alpine camp, my thoughts have since instantly reverted with delight to the happiest wandering that I ever enjoyed between the Pāmīrs and the Indian Ocean.

AUREL STEIN, 1929, from Nathiagali, the summer headquarters of the Northwest Frontier Province, *On Alexander's Track to the Indus*³³

The scholar is Aurel Stein, the Hungarian-British archaeologist, geographer, linguist, and surveyor of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whose famous narrative of his travels, *On Alexander's Track to the Indus*, has inspired almost a century of travellers since its publication in 1929. Stein stands out for *not* wanting to suffer as Alexander and his men had suffered, to experience what they had experienced; he had a clear goal—to find the citadel of Aornos, the site of one of Alexander's most famous (and final) sieges.³⁴ He led two expeditions, one in 1904, the second in 1925, under the auspices of Her Majesty's Indian Government and with the cooperation of the Indian Archaeological Survey. His numerous illustrations, photographs, and original surveys of the region helped him confirm, in his opinion, that Aornos Rock is Pir-Sar in the Swāt Valley in Pakistan.³⁵ Stein made several other small side journeys during his expeditions and said he would have loved to have done more, had he not needed to return home so that he could write up his conclusions about the location of Aornos.

Correspondents from the Field

Lowell Thomas, an American writer and broadcaster and one of the most beloved members of the Explorers Club, is known for, among other things, helping to popularize and romanticize T.E. Lawrence. One of Thomas' best-known travel stories is about his trek over the Khyber Pass in Afghanistan, in which he notes "The only man who ever really subdued the country was Alexander, whose name is still a byword."³⁶ Thomas and his companions had

33 Aurel Stein, *On Alexander's Track to the Indus: Personal Narrative of Explorations on the North-West Frontier of India* (London: Phoenix Press, [1929] 2001), 173.

34 Arr. *Anab.* 4.28.1–30.4; Curt. 8.11.2–25; Diod. Sic. 17.85; Plut. *Vit. Alex.*, 58.3; Strabo 15.1.8.

35 Stein, *On Alexander's Track*, chapters 16–21.

36 See p. 216 in Lowell Thomas, "Over the Khyber to Kabul", in *As Told at the Explorers Club: More than Fifty Gripping Tales of Adventure*, ed. George Plimpton (Guilford, CT: Lyons

the good sense to be “a bit jumpy” as they entered Kabul, knowing what reception many men had met in those mountains.

Helen and Frank Schreider were a globe-trotting American couple, UCLA graduates, Frank with a Navy background, who spend much of the twentieth century happily traversing the globe and then writing up and dining out on their stories. In January of 1968, their feature article “In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great” appeared in *National Geographic* magazine.³⁷ By foot, horseback, and, in a nod to Alexander’s trusty horse, Bucephalus the Land Rover, they covered over 40,000 kilometres, more than Alexander, and although they were no strangers to challenging travel, this was their most demanding journey ever. Like their predecessors, they used Classical texts and maps as guides. They covered twelve different countries, retracing both the known routes and searching for the track when it disappeared.

Their narrative style is reminiscent of Herodotus: they love to tell stories about people and places they encounter; they are fascinated with customs and what they perceive to be human universals. Little of it seems to be related to Alexander, and yet it is as if they are trying to convey the experience Alexander would have had in meeting new peoples and discovering new places. They are enchanted with most everyone they meet, or at least they romanticize their telling to make it seem so. Confusion and misunderstandings are minor, and most people treated them as honoured guests and help them generously along the way.

The Schreiders, perhaps genuinely, represented themselves as a couple who like “keeping it real”, enjoying at least a modicum of suffering so as to share something with Alexander, the inspiration for their journey. Sometimes they try to go beyond what Alexander did; when they crossed the Desert of Death, Dasht-i-Margo in southern Afghanistan, they noted that it probably would not have been so bleak in Alexander’s time. They jump from ruined city to ruined city in an effort to follow Alexander’s path, but they were experiencing an empty landscape that in their mind would have been better trafficked, maintained, and irrigated in antiquity.³⁸ They traversed the Hindu Kush in mid-winter, instead of in spring as Alexander and his men did, and in spite of the snow and freezing rivers (and the fact that they had Bucephalus the Land

Press, 2005), 211–219, originally published in *Through Hell and High Water, by Members of the Explorers Club*, ed. Seward S. Cramer (New York: Robert M. McBride, 1941).

37 Helen and Frank Schreider, “In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great”, *National Geographic*, January 1968, 1–66.

38 Schreider and Schreider, “In the Footsteps of Alexander”, 32–33.

Rover), they did it on horseback and foot. Helen was thrown from her horse into a snowbank, and they quoted Curtius Rufus to illustrate their empathic connection with the suffering of Alexander's men: "The army ... in this absence of all human civilization, endured all the evils that could be suffered, want, cold, fatigue, despair ... When they struggled to rise again, they could not do so. But they were roused from their torpor by their fellow soldiers, for there was no other cure than to ... go on."³⁹ They covered seventy-five kilometres in five days, only to take a bus back to Kabul to retrieve Bucephalus and cross the mountains all over again, this time by Land Rover.⁴⁰

In Pakistan, they found one of their prize targets—the legendary descendants of Alexander's men, supposedly identifiable by their consumption of wine and use of wooden sepulchres.⁴¹ After entering northern Pakistan by the Khyber Pass, the route was blocked by snow at Peshawar, and they had to tackle it by a combination of foot, Jeep, and flight before reaching the Brumboret and Rumbur Valleys, where they discovered the Kalash Kafirs, who sit on chairs, which is something the Schreiders had not seen since they visited villages east of Turkey (except at Kamdesh in north-eastern Afghanistan). The women wear headdresses with cowrie shells resembling ones they had seen in Greece, and the men have berets that look like hats on the mosaics at Pella and coins dating to Alexander's time. Around the villages are large carved wooden statues with pointed helmets that look like helmets on the friezes of the walls at Persepolis; the statues are made to honour the dead, and when they venerate them, they must also sacrifice goats and give a feast for the village, so as not to look arrogant. The women dance around the fire at night "like early Greeks" but unlike surrounding Islamic tribes. Although the Schreiders admitted that this all might be coincidence, they are charmed by the number of connections that they are able to make.⁴²

In leaving Pakistan, the Schreiders have a decision to make about crossing the 1,800 kilometres of wasteland across the Balochistan (Gedrosian) desert. Some of Alexander's men had returned by ship along the coast, and it would still have been in the spirit of the campaigns for the couple to take that route

39 Schreider and Schreider, "In the Footsteps of Alexander", 37, 39; Curt. 7.3.12, 14.

40 Schreider and Schreider, "In the Footsteps of Alexander", 33–39.

41 Curt. 8.10.7–18.

42 Schreider and Schreider, "In the Footsteps of Alexander", 49–55. For more on the Kalash Kafirs, see the beginning of the fourth episode in Wallace and Wood's series, *In the Footsteps of Alexander*. See also George Scott Robertson, *The Kafirs of the Hindu-Kush*, by Sir George Scott Robertson (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1896); W.W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (Cambridge: University Press, 1938).

back. In the end, however, they decided that they had followed Alexander himself too far only to abandon him close to the end of the trail—especially since they were about to start on the part of the journey that Arrian (6.24.1) describes as having caused more suffering than anything Alexander's men had endured in Asia. The Schreiders had no track to follow, and they struggled through sandstorms and flash floods and had to dig Bucephalus the Land Rover out of the sand. Finally, just when they were beginning to think they had made a serious mistake, they found a way out of the desert and reached Persepolis. They end the article by musing on what could have been had Alexander not died so young, but they realize that the “rivalry with himself” that helped him to an early grave also may have contributed to his “greatness.”⁴³ For all their admiration, the Schreiders themselves, however, had limits, to be revisited at the end of this chapter.

Any Alexander enthusiast will be familiar with Michael Wood, the British historian and documentarian who revived recent interest in Alexander's conquests with his late-nineties BBC series and the later accompanying book *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great*.⁴⁴ Wood, with his texts in his bag, set out to retrace, for the first time (to his knowledge, although he does not mention the Schreiders, who covered over 40,000 kilometres—surely they deserve recognition!) since Alexander's day, the full route of Alexander's ten years of campaigning. Wood and his team cover this ground and more, as they re-cross some of it in their quest to find lost routes and keep to the track as faithfully as possible. If Alexander and his men had to walk in the surf, as they did near Antalya, Wood follows.⁴⁵ One of the only major departures from the ancient route was being unable to visit Baghdad for security reasons.⁴⁶ Although he and his crew were aided at times, of course, by modern transportation, Wood still did his best to experience some of what Alexander would have, including heading into the Hindu Kush mountains on foot with only as much as three horses can carry (copies of Arrian and Curtius Rufus made it into his list of essential items). Wood tried to recreate Aurel Stein's locating of the secret path that led Alexander and his army to the citadel of Aornos (Pir-Sar). His attempt to find this path resulted in the team's being lost across a knife ridge

43 Schreider and Schreider, “In the Footsteps of Alexander”, 65.

44 Wallace and Wood, *In the Footsteps of Alexander*. The series was accompanied by a book by Michael Wood, *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great: A Journey from Greece to India* (London: BBC Books, 1997).

45 Strabo 14.3.9. See the twenty-four-minute mark in the first part of Wood's series.

46 Wood, *In the Footsteps of Alexander* (1997 book), 15.

on the mountainside in the dark, wondering how Alexander managed this with an entire army, also at night, with snow still on the ground.⁴⁷

For an example of a more recent journey, see self-described “history buff” Theodore May’s 2010 entries on National Geographic’s *Intelligent Travel* blog. After working as a reporter in Cairo, he travelled throughout seven countries and territories, including Iraq, Turkey, and Egypt. He had realized that “you never learn more about a group of people than when you’re living with them”, so he set off along part of Alexander’s route to “wed past and present” as he juxtaposed the history of the great man with important contemporary regional issues.⁴⁸ May starts out the way Alexander “would have done it”, even if that meant slogging through muddy fields or along dangerously busy highways; understandably, he appears to have given some of that up pretty quickly, instead focusing on making observations on what he sees or on the people he meets. Still, he walks most of his six-month-journey, using only a few alternative methods at times, such as riding to Siwa Oasis on a bicycle.⁴⁹ At the end of May’s first National Geographic post, one commenter asked, “When you’re done walking in Alexander’s footsteps, what do you think you will have learned?”⁵⁰ He did not get an answer to his question, and the blog’s readers never got an answer about what May learnt at the end of his journey; the last blog entry is in August and does not offer any reflections on the journey. One wonders what May would write if he were permitted to update the blog after six or seven years of processing his experiences.

47 See 6:30–13:50 in part 4 of Wallace and Wood’s series, *In the Footsteps of Alexander*; also Wood, *In the Footsteps of Alexander* (1997 book), 178.

48 Theodore May, “Trucks, Goats, and Introductions”, *Intelligent Travel* (web log), April 28, 2010, accessed April 01, 2017, http://intelligenttravel.nationalgeographic.com/2010/04/28/trucks_goats_and_introductions/.

49 Theodore May, “In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great”, Public Radio International, April 15, 2010, accessed April 01, 2017, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2010-04-15/footsteps-alexander-great>; Theodore May, “Biking through the Sahara”, Public Radio International, November 30, 2010, accessed April 01, 2017, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2010-11-30/biking-through-sahara>.

50 David Webb, April 30, 2010 (7:12 pm), comment on Theodore May, “Trucks, Goats, and Introductions”, *Intelligent Travel* (web log), April 28, 2010, accessed April 01, 2017, http://intelligenttravel.nationalgeographic.com/2010/04/28/trucks_goats_and_introductions/.

The Adventurers

The true adventurers and dreamers of the bunch are Richard Halliburton and Freya Stark. Although many of the other travellers included in this chapter wrote entertaining books, made fascinating documentaries, and led exciting expeditions, these two are in a class all their own. Not sent by the East India Company, stationed in Afghanistan, or working with an organized support team, these two set off (admittedly with financial resources) on their own on very personal quests to see what was unknown to them and share it with others.

Stark was a British woman traveling in the early/mid twentieth century, largely self-taught with some historical education at the University of London.⁵¹ In 1954, shortly after her separation from her husband (a late-in-life marriage), she began traveling through western Turkey, in part with the goal of retracing Alexander's route. Based on three journeys through Caria and Cilicia, by horse, foot, and Jeep, she wrote that she intended the narrative based on this journey to be a simple travel book, except that Alexander kept "intruding" on her thoughts.⁵² What she meant by that is explained by her descriptions of her thinking in speculating about Alexander's decisions to choose one path over another. Like most of the other travellers, she had her copies of Arrian, Curtius Rufus, and Plutarch with her, and when she would read a passage about the geography of his route, and the choice of path or angle of attack did not make sense to her, she would try to reconstruct Alexander's logic by studying the terrain (recognizing that it might have changed over the centuries). She notes that Alexander is geographically minded (something she concludes from her studies of the ancient texts), so she believes that this is a reasonable approach, even though she recognizes its limitations in being able to read his mind; she knows certainly there were other factors.⁵³

Even so, she feels a connection with Alexander over this appreciation for geography and studying the terrain, as well as the fact that he was at heart, in her estimation, "more of an explorer than an administrator by nature", and as such he "had the explorer's readiness for the unknown".⁵⁴ She herself prefers more of a balance between things going as planned and diverting from the day's program. In one passage, she enjoys being tucked into her warm bed, leaving

51 For an excellent biography, see Jane Fletcher Geniesse, *Passionate Nomad: The Life of Freya Stark* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001).

52 Stark, *Alexander's Path*.

53 Stark, *Alexander's Path*, 143–144.

54 Stark, *Alexander's Path*, 17.

the ghosts of Alexander and his men outside in the rain.⁵⁵ Quite quickly she abandons the traditional format of the travel guide to go off searching for a bit of Alexander's experience in Turkey, but when logistics go awry, she is put out and perhaps sensibly would have preferred Peter Sommer's tour bus, had it been an option. Like Alexander's men, she has her limits and might well herself have given Koinos' speech to Alexander, "having no heart for further dangers and [being] glad to turn back".⁵⁶

Stark, however, is self-critical about her limits and concludes the book with an anecdote about a journey in Caria in an inadequate Jeep. When the Jeep can no longer continue, she abandons her Turkish guides for a better Jeep, only to reflect later that Alexander would not have abandoned his men had the caravan come to a temporary halt. Her conclusion is that after all her efforts, she in essence has ruined much of her journey with that one action, and doing things like what she did is what is wrong with the modern world. Stark was possessed of some significant personal demons.⁵⁷

Richard Halliburton, on the other hand, was an intrepid American adventurer whose writing emits pure joy. In the 1920s and 30s, Halliburton travelled across the entire globe, occasionally on his own, occasionally with friends, including the pilot Moye Stephens. He kept his narratives quite simple, often at a level accessible to children (thought snubbed by the *literati*), but he was a glamorous (or obnoxious) figure, friends with journalists, movie stars, athletes, authors, and royalty. He had several short romances, some with famous men and women, and one long-term relationship with the author and journalist Paul Mooney.⁵⁸ *The Flying Carpet* and the *Book of Marvels* are two of his most enduring works out of the many he wrote.⁵⁹

55 Stark, *Alexander's Path*, 87–88.

56 Arr. *Anab.* 5.27.9–5.28.1, (transl. Pamela Mensch), in Arrian, Pamela Mensch, and James S. Romm, *The Landmark Arrian: The Campaigns of Alexander; Anabasis Alexandrou: A New Translation* (New York: Anchor Books, 2012).

57 Stark, *Alexander's Path*, 221. Again, it is worth noting that Stark was writing this immediately after divorcing the husband she married at the age of fifty-four. Stark also had a difficult childhood; her parents had an unhappy marriage, and when she was thirteen, she had an accident that left her with some perceptible facial differences that bothered her. See Geniesse, *Passionate Nomad*, chapter 2 for Stark's childhood and pages 141 and 159 for the lingering effects of the accident.

58 Gerry Max, *Horizon Chasers: The Lives and Adventures of Richard Halliburton and Paul Mooney* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2007); Cathryn J. Prince, *American Daredevil: The Extraordinary Life of Richard Halliburton, the World's First Celebrity Travel Writer* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, 2016).

59 Halliburton, *The Flying Carpet*; Richard Halliburton, *Richard Halliburton's Complete Book*

Having a Classical education from The Lawrenceville School and Princeton, one of Halliburton's interests was journeys like those of Odysseus, Hannibal, and Alexander. Halliburton found Byron a romantic figure, even tapping into his spirit by swimming the Hellespont. Although he was unable to cross the Alps by elephant like Hannibal (something he desired to do), he did manage to retrace Cortés' conquest of Mexico.⁶⁰ In *The Flying Carpet*, he recounts that he had been reading about Alexander, imagining what his conquests and his march home from India must have been like. While on his travels, Halliburton had been near many of Alexander's routes, visiting the tomb of Cyrus, the citadel at Persepolis, and flying over Babylon. Although he notes, like Stark, that certainly the landscape had changed since Alexander's time, he thought it was possible to reconstruct something, and he enjoyed imagining Alexander's thoughts and the great battles that might have taken place below his own little airplane. Halliburton's modesty has its limits, however, for he ends the chapter noting that the airplane has allowed him to go beyond the boundaries of Alexander's conquests—"I put my history books away. We were in sight of Karachi, beyond which Alexander had never gone."⁶¹

The Limits of Wanderlust

After all, what great or noble thing would we ourselves have accomplished, had we sat in Macedonia ...?

ALEXANDER, Hyphasis River, 326 BCE (ARR. *Anab.* 5.26.6)⁶²

While these journeys represent significant investments of time, effort, and personal sacrifice, they clearly fulfilled financial, emotional, and intellectual needs that perhaps would not have been met sufficiently in other ways. Several of these travellers do, however, acknowledge—even revel in—the extreme nature of what they are doing, or at least what it would have meant to do it in Alexander's time, without support or modern aids. For obvious reasons, Wood

of *Marvels*, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1941). The *Complete Book of Marvels* originally was printed in two volumes: *The Occident* (1937) and *The Orient* (1938).

60 For Cortés' journey, see Richard Halliburton, *New Worlds to Conquer*, (United States: Long Riders' Guild Press, [1929] 2001). For his journey tracing Odysseus' trek home, see Richard Halliburton, *The Glorious Adventure: Through the Mediterranean in the Wake of Odysseus* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, [1927] 2011).

61 Halliburton, *The Flying Carpet*, 190.

62 Arr. *Anab.* 5.26.6, *Landmark Arrian*, (transl. Mensch).

required an entire documentary support team, while the Schreiders actually made a great deal of the trip on their own, taking their own photographs and hiring guides only when they needed them. Even with a support team, the terrain still was challenging. When Wood followed Alexander's tracks into the sea off of the Turkish coast, he observed: "I learned three things about Alexander that day: that he didn't always think things out ahead; that he was an obstinate man, and also, and most important of all, he was lucky."⁶³ When Wood tried to figure out why Alexander would have taken his men on the knife-edge secret path on the mountainside in the dark to reach Aornos, the only explanation he could come up with is Alexander's *pothos*.⁶⁴

In the last book of the *Anabasis*, Arrian (7.1.6) has a group of Indian sages tell Alexander that he is πολυπράγμων καὶ ἀτάσθαλος—restless and reckless in his constant travels—and they foreshadow his death by reminding him that in the end, he will have conquered more than enough land for his grave. Although Richard Halliburton's adventures were, of course, very different from Alexander's, arguably *polypragmon* and *atasthalos* apply to parts of Halliburton's travels also, because the two men have one important thing in common—an untimely end. In 1939, Halliburton and Paul Mooney, along with a tiny crew, set out to cross the Pacific Ocean on a Chinese junk, just for the adventure of it, and disappeared. Halliburton was thirty-nine, just seven years older than Alexander was when he died in Babylon.⁶⁵

With the exception of Alexander Burns and Arthur Conolly, the other travellers in this chapter either are still alive or died at an advanced age from natural causes.⁶⁶ Frank Schreider died at the age of seventy of a heart attack in the cabin of his yacht—at sea, like Halliburton, doing what he loved, but from natural causes as an older man. The Schreiders had claimed their share of moderately exciting danger—the occasional Jeep trouble, storm, typhoid, or their

63 Strabo 14.3.9; see the twenty-four minute mark in the first part of Wallace and Wood's series, *In the Footsteps of Alexander*.

64 Wallace and Wood, *In the Footsteps of Alexander*, part 4, 9:40.

65 In 1931, Halliburton and Moya Stephens had flown over Babylon with Crown Prince Ghazi of Iraq, on what was Ghazi's first airplane ride (Halliburton, *The Flying Carpet*, chapter 19). Two years later, Ghazi became king but then died shortly thereafter, in 1939, the same year as Halliburton, in what either was an accidental or manufactured sports car crash (Matthew Elliot, "The Death of King Ghazi: Iraqi Politics, Britain and Kuwait in 1939", *Contemporary British History* 10.3 (1996): 63–81, doi:10.1080/13619469608581405).

66 Harlan might have preferred a more exciting death; he died at the age of seventy-two of tuberculosis in obscurity in San Francisco, largely discredited after his outlandish exploits (Macintyre, *Josiah the Great*, 286).

temperamental boat, *La Tortuga*, taking on a little water—but they, however, were sensible about fetching doctors and seeking out boat repairmen and letting men with guns know they were harmless Americans.⁶⁷ In their quest to follow in Alexander's footsteps, if they could do it honestly on foot or by horse, they did; if they had to fly, they flew. Much of it was made, sensibly and responsibly, in Bucephalus the Land Rover, so they could deliver a beautiful article full of glossy photographs, as promised, to *National Geographic*. When they started to get themselves into questionable situations, they got themselves out as soon as it starts to look dicey. Crossing the entire Pacific in an untested boat with known flaws, as Halliburton did, is something the Schreiders almost certainly would not have done. Helen and Frank Schreider may quote Alexander in Arrian (*Anab.* 5.26.4) on living with courage, even dying, for renown, but in the end, throughout their many wonderful travels, they showed the *sophrosyne* recommended by Koinos: "Nothing is so honorable as self-restraint (*sophrosyne*) in the midst of good fortune ..." ⁶⁸ As noted in Frank's obituary, although he "supported his wanderlust by his pen", he and his wife Helen seemed to know their limits.⁶⁹

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67 Helen and Frank Schreider, *20000 Miles South: A Pan American Adventure* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957); Helen and Frank Schreider, *The Drums of Tonkin: An Adventure in Indonesia* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1963).

68 Arr. *Anab.* 5.27.9; (transl. Mensch), *Landmark Arrian*.

69 "Frank Schreider, 70, Who Wrote Of World Travels, Dies on Boat", *Obituaries*, March 31, 1994, accessed April 01, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/04/01/obituaries/frank-schreider-70-who-wrote-of-world-travels-dies-on-boat.html>.

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The Great Misstep: Alexander the Great, Thais, and the Destruction of Persepolis*

Alex McAuley

Alexander the Great's destruction of the Achaemenid palace at Persepolis in the winter of 330 BC should have been many things. It should have been the moment at which the ideology of Alexander and Philip's Panhellenic Crusade against the Persian Empire culminated in a stirring symbolic gesture. It should have at last avenged the sack of the Athenian acropolis by Xerxes over a century and a half previously. It should have signified the victory of the Greeks under Alexander against the myriad nations of the Persian host, thus representing the collapse of the old world order under the sheer weight of Alexander's energy. It should have been his greatest triumph, a moment of transition between the destruction of one empire and the construction of another. Despite these great expectations, the sack of Persepolis is almost universally disparaged by our ancient sources as an act of wanton violence that represents one of the few but nonetheless magnificent failures of Alexander's judgment.¹

The gusts of confusion that blew around the ashes of Persepolis have fanned the flames of ancient and modern speculation over the perplexing question of why Alexander would have done such a thing. The divergent reactions of Greek and Roman commentators on the event have been rewoven by dozens of contemporary scholars into different webs of causality. This "great puzzle in the history of Alexander", as Bloedow once termed it, tends to be solved by three

* A preliminary version of this chapter was first presented at the conference *Persepolis: 40 Years On*, organized by Prof. Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones and Dr Sandra Bingham at the University of Edinburgh, 14–16 October, 2011. My thanks go to the conference attendees for their invaluable feedback, and in particular to Prof. Llewellyn-Jones for his subsequent insight. Later versions of this research were presented at l'Université de Montréal and McGill University in 2013 and 2014, and in both cases the comments of the respective audiences were greatly appreciated. All translations from Greek, Latin, and Italian texts are my own.

1 Thre ancient accounts of the Palace's destruction are: Arrian. *Anab.* 3.18.11–12, Diod. 17.72.1–6, Curt. 5.7.11, Plut. *Alex.* 38.1–8, while the earliest mention of Thais is found via Cleitarchus in Athenaeus 13.576D–E, FGrH 11B 137, Fr. 11.

different schools of thought: those who argue that this was simply an act of perversity and revenge, those who believe it was an act of drunken indiscretion, and finally those who give some measure of credit to Alexander by claiming that this was an act of calculated policy intended to tear down the walls of cultural memory separating the Greeks and the Persians.² But the many brands that various scholars have tossed on the fire—from Olmstead's dismissal of it as an "act of sheer vandalism" to the symbolic capital weighed by Tarn or the Greek context elucidated by Badian and the revenge motive of Noldeke, von Gutschmid, and Niese—have done little to illuminate the historical reality of the situation.³ Borza provides perhaps the best summation as he writes "Alexander committed an act which cannot be justified on political, military, or moral grounds within the context of the values of his own age."⁴ This may well be the case, but the fact that Alexander burned down Persepolis remains, regardless of his specific motivations.

Perhaps in the context of the present volume, then, it is more fruitful to steer away from the rocks and shoals of attributing historical causality to Alexander at Persepolis and instead consider its evolving cultural significance over the course of nearly two and a half millennia. If the event remains impenetrable when it comes to better understanding the historical figure of Alexander, then at the very least it can give some insight into how he has been interpreted and re-interpreted.⁵ Amid the fanfare surrounding the destruction of the palace stands a woman who figures prominently in three out of four of our ancient accounts, and thus provides the ideal foil for understanding both Alexander's role in the episode itself and evolving perceptions thereof: Thais of Athens, the courtesan blamed for planting the seed of Persepolis' destruction in the

2 Edmond F. Bloedow, "That great puzzle in the history of Alexander: back into the primal pit of historical murk" in *Rom und der Griechische Osten, Festschrift Hatto Schmitt*, eds Ch. Schubert and K. Brodersen (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag), 20–41.

3 Bloedow, "That Great Puzzle", 20–35 provides a highly detailed overview of the historiography of the event and its evolving schools of thought, with full references. The most recent overview of Persepolis more generally is Ali Mousavi, *Persepolis: Discovery and Afterlife of a World Wonder* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), with a thorough discussion of the sack of the palace at 57–72.

4 Eugene N. Borza, "Fire from Heaven: Alexander at Persepolis," *Classical Philology* 67, no. 4 (1972), 233.

5 For other interpretations of the sack of Persepolis, see: N.G.L. Hammond, "The Archaeological and Literary Evidence for the Burning of the Persepolis Palace," *CQ* 42 no. 2 (1992): 358–386; also Edmund Bloedow and Heather Loube, "Alexander the Great 'under fire' at Persepolis," *Klio* 79 (1997): 341–353.

wine-dulled head of the Macedonian king.⁶ As was the case with Alexander, contemporary commentators have focused on the historical reality of Thais, attempting to resolve the questions of whether she really was there at the event, and if she was actually the instigating figure in all of this.⁷ I pose these questions rhetorically because in a sense they can never be answered with our available source material. Instead, in this chapter I shall focus on Alexander, Thais, and Persepolis itself not as an historical trio but rather as a cultural trio. Examining them as symbols, as characters in the overarching drama of Alexander's morality as they have been understood through the ages is, I hope, more conducive to understanding the Conqueror's legacy than another attempt at rationalizing his actions.

The narrative of Alexander's destruction of Persepolis and the individuals who figured prominently in the episode are, like so many other aspects of his life, embroidered artefacts. But examining how and why the narrative was embroidered and manipulated as it was (and indeed continues to be) sheds more light on the tradition itself and those who composed it than on the historical figure—which is precisely our intent here. To those ancient authors recounting it, the event stood for so much more than just the destruction of a palace: it provides a window into the morality of Alexander, his motivations, his character traits and flaws, his response to the guidance of those around him, and his attitudes towards Greeks and Persians. The destruction of Persepolis thus presents an ideal case study for the reception of Alexander given just how much is at stake in the affair. In order to investigate the evolving legacy of the event, we shall begin by re-examining the idiosyncrasies of the ancient accounts which together provide the base on which the subsequent tradition was formed. From Diodorus, Rufus, and Plutarch we shall then turn to numerous depictions in various media of Alexander, Thais, and Persepolis ranging from the poetry of Dante to 21st century Russian dating websites.⁸ In the pro-

6 As Borza, "Fire from Heaven", 234–235 commented, "the Thais story has always been hard to treat because of its bizarre nature," although "there appears to be no reason to deny that she was at Persepolis."

7 The Thais discussed in this chapter is Thais [1] in *Der neue Pauly*. For a biographical overview and her appearances in ancient literature, see Chris Bennett, "Ptolemaic Dynasty—Thais, Mistress of Ptolemy I," Ptolemaic Dynasty—Thais, Mistress of Ptolemy I, 2011, accessed July 29, 2016, http://www.tyndalehouse.com/Egypt/ptolemies/thais_fr.htm.

8 I exclude Arrian's account (*Anab* 3.18.11–12) of the destruction of Persepolis for its brevity and the fact that it does not align with the accounts of our other ancient sources. Arrian simply states that Alexander set fire to the palace (3.18.11), and despite Parmenion's protestations

cess, we see that the tradition follows a path that we would perhaps not expect, leading from ancient criticism of Alexander's excess to a very prominent sense of orientalism which, ironically, does not fully present itself until the 20th century. Throughout, the reception of Alexander is inextricably bound to Thais and Persepolis itself, and so to glimpse the individual king we must consider all three in tandem.

Noble in Its Ruins: The Ancient Tradition of the Fire at Persepolis

When we consider the surviving ancient accounts of Alexander at Persepolis alongside one another and examine their similarities not only with regards to data and judgment but also vocabulary and syntax, it becomes abundantly obvious that Diodorus, Plutarch, Curtius Rufus, and to a lesser extent Athenaeus were composing their own narratives from the same original source material.⁹ Using this bare-bones and generally neutral outline of the event, each author then proceeded to interpret the episode and add their own emphases, details, flourishes, and colouring. Some themes are prioritized, others downplayed, while agency and responsibility for the event are parcelled out with varying degrees of condemnation. To try and determine the precise authorship and transmission of the original account would be to wade into the quagmire of Alexandrine historiography—decidedly beyond the scope of this chapter and volume.¹⁰ Instead, examining the manner in which each author selectively employs the narrative and links it to the broader themes of their work is our first hint at the reception of Alexander, Thais, and Persepolis.

that he was burning his own property Alexander justifies his acts by reminding him of the atrocities committed against the Greeks by Xerxes in the Persian Wars. Arrian, however, neither feels that Alexander was sensible in doing so nor does he think that his acts avenged these atrocities (3.18.11).

9 See in particular the discussion of Bloedow and Loube, "Alexander the Great".

10 Hammond, "The Archaeological and Literary Evidence", 360–363 identifies Arrian's account as the "official" version of the palace's destruction, while he argues that the sacking of the city itself and the drunken party in which Thais figures so prominently are rhetorical fabrications comprising a "vulgate tradition", without providing convincing substantiation of this hypothesis. I, however, concur with the detailed refutation of Bloedow and Loube, "Alexander the Great", 349–352, and their argument for rehabilitating the "vulgate tradition." Regardless of the historicity of the latter tradition, it rather than the "official" version of Arrian provided the basis for subsequent receptions of the event.

The original source narrative that emerges from this comparison of our sources (likely Callisthenes via Cleitarchus) has seven major plot points which recur in the same order in each of our three principal accounts. They are as follows:

1. Alexander pauses at Persepolis in the winter of 330 BC, as he is about to march against Darius, who has fled to the East.
2. There is a banquet with the *hetairoi* at which women were present, and all were drinking heavily.
3. One of the women present was an Athenian named Thais.
4. Thais mentions the idea of burning down Persepolis as a means of avenging the injustices committed against the Greeks during the Persian Wars.
5. The crowd of those present agrees with Thais and supports the idea.
6. Alexander acquiesces.
7. Persepolis is burned to the ground.

This original account of the event is not nearly as embellished and inflammatory as the subsequent interpretations of Diodorus, Plutarch, and Curtius Rufus. The general neutrality of the narrative is noteworthy in that no one seems to be explicitly blamed for the event; it is rather more of a factual account, presumably by an eyewitness.¹¹ Blame and scorn were only parcelled out by later commentators, not the original observers. Yet the idea of burning down Persepolis and its ideological justification was proposed by Thais, not by Alexander, who simply acquiesces to the will of the inebriated crowd. Using this source material, each later author then added their own colouring and embellishments, and we shall consider their idiosyncrasies in turn.

Diodorus in general is presumed to be relatively uncritical in his depiction of Alexander, but there is still some chastisement and blame to be found in his narrative of the episode. The fire at the palace of Persepolis is preceded by the rape and plunder of the adjacent city; an event which, to the Sicilian, is lamentable in and of itself: “thus the greatest and the most renowned of all the palaces in the world was destroyed by hubris and utter ruin”, as the Macedonians “spent the day in plundering, raping, and their greedy desire for more could not be satisfied” (Diod. 17.70, 3–4). Drunkenness figures prominently in his account, as he mentions repeatedly and in close proximity that everyone present was extremely inebriated (τῶν οἰνωμένων, 17.72.1; διὰ τὴν μέθην ἀλόγως

¹¹ Ibid., 351, supposing that Cleitarchus’ sources were the first-hand accounts of soldiers present.

μετεωριζομένους 17.72.3). Alexander, of course, should likely be counted in their number. Thais is identified as “one of the women present” (17.72.2 μία τῶν παρουσῶν γυναικῶν), and convinces Alexander to destroy the palace by saying that it would be the greatest of all of his accomplishments in Asia if he joined them in a revelrous procession and burned the palace. Gender inversion figures prominently in this account, as Thais states that the event would be all the more meaningful “if the hands of a woman were to, in short order, blot out all of the accomplishments of the Persians”. Alexander, for his part, is the victim of this group pressure: with a genitive absolute the historian describes the king as having been “lifted up by these words” in the passive voice, and then proceeds to lead the procession (τοῦ βασιλέως συνεξαρθέντος τοῖς λόγοις 17.72.4). Even though Alexander threw the first torch, Diodorus explicitly states that Thais was in charge of the entire affair. With the palace destroyed, he then muses that “the thing which was most unexpected of all was that the impious acts of Xerxes, king of the Persians, at the Acropolis of Athens were avenged much later by one woman, of the same city that had suffered this, and in jest” (17.72.6) The prepositional phrase ἐν παιδιᾷ sums up Diodorus’ view of the affair perfectly: this wanton act was performed as child’s play, as a game, or as juvenile amusement.

Turning to our next source chronologically, in accordance with his biographical and moralistic preoccupations Plutarch (*Alex.* 38.1–4) uses this entire scene as one that indicates Alexander’s minor and major character flaws: the former is his fondness for wine, and the latter—far worse—is his infinite susceptibility to flattery. Thais, for her part, is much more vividly described in this recapitulation: she is identified as “the most renowned of the women present” (εὐδοκίμοῦσα μάλιστα Θάϊς, 38.1); she is better described, and more vocal and verbose. After flattering Alexander, she appeals to him to burn Persepolis, justifying the act by citing her own hardships in Asia and thus her own sense of entitlement (38.3). Plutarch seems to think that the goal of the act itself—avenging Athens—was noble, but that it was sullied by the agency and initiative of Thais (38.1). There is no doubt that it was her fault, not Alexander’s: the biographer describes how Thais kindled the fire of a torch as she inflamed Alexander’s ego, which was all the more bolstered by the enthusiasm of his *hetairoi*.¹² Alexander is then persuaded, again in the passive voice (ἐπισπασθείς), and leaps up

12 The vividness of Plutarch’s description (*Alex.* 38.2) merits repetition here: αὐτὴ τὸ πῦρ ἄψασα τοῦ βασιλέως ὁρώντος, ὡς ἂν λόγος ἔχῃ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ὅτι τῶν ναυμάχων καὶ πεζομάχων ἐκείνων στρατηγῶν τὰ μετὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου γύναια μείζονα δίκην ἐπέθηκε Πέρσαις ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἑλλάδος.

(ἀναπηδήσας) to lead the procession. It is noteworthy that, according to Plutarch, Alexander almost immediately regretted his actions and ordered the fire to be put out (38.4).

Quintus Curtius Rufus (5.7.1–11) is by far the least subtle of our ancient sources in his judgements of the event. The episode at Persepolis appears immediately after a discussion of Alexander's magnanimous traits—generosity, military prowess, courage (5.7.1)—that are all tarnished by his fondness for wine and the idleness it provokes. The event has the same festive setting as our other accounts, but Rufus chastises Alexander by noting that as his control over the empire was waning and Darius was planning a new campaign against him, the Macedonian king instead chose to drink heavily during the middle of the day rather than attend to such pressing matters.¹³ The Latin historian is particularly disparaging of the women present, describing them as the sort “not indeed whom it would be a crime to violate” (*non quidem quas violari nefas esset*, 5.7.2). Compared to Diodorus' identification of these women as simply γυναῖκες this is vast departure which in turn reflects negatively on Alexander by virtue of the profligate company he keeps. One out of this group of women, Thais, is described as *temulenta*—very drunk (5.7.3)—plays to Alexander's ambitions and subtly leads him towards his own conclusion to burn down the palace. Thais, in short, plays the king like a fiddle, and was able to do so because his own discretion was diluted by wine (5.7.3–5). Susceptibility to this woman's influence is again a trait worthy of criticism, particularly when she is branded an *ebrium scortum*—“a drunken whore” (5.7.5). The king then leads the rest of those present in tossing a torch at the palace (5.7.5–7), though the event was clearly the product of impulse as the Macedonian soldiers are described as rushing to the scene, thinking that the fire was an accident. His closing rumination on the palace's fate captures the ancient attitude towards its destruction perfectly: “and thus the palace of the entire Orient, where previously so many peoples had sought justice, the native city of so many kings who had struck unparalleled terror into the Greeks by building a fleet of a thousand ships, the army and navy that inundated Europe after it had bridged the sea and cut a channel through mountains into which a canal flowed, had this end”.¹⁴

13 Curtius Rufus 5.7.2: *Hoste et aemulo regni reparante cum maxime bellum, nuper subactis, quos vicerat, novumque imperium aspernantibus de die inibat convivia, quibus feminae intererant.*

14 Curt. Ruf. 5.7.8: *Hunc exitum habuit regia totius Orientis, unde tot gentes antea iura petebant, patria tot regum, unicus quondam Graeciae terror, molita mille navium classem et*

The short account of Athenaeus merits correspondingly brief mention. In Book 13 of the *Deipnosophistae*, he writes that it was Cleitarchus (576e) who identified Thais as the cause that the palace of Persepolis was burned down, thus Alexander does not really factor in to the situation. But Thais is mentioned as part of a longer discussion (576e–f) of the double-edged influence of courtesans. On the one hand, they have potential for virtuous action in saving or aiding Greek cities which is enabled by their station and connections. On the other hand, though, their proximity to power makes kings and generals susceptible to their corrupting charms, especially when it comes to flattery and self-aggrandizement. Beautiful courtesans can distract and occupy kings who should otherwise be engaged in more pressing affairs, echoing the morality of Curtius Rufus. One wonders whether this passage is meant to be an indictment of Alexander or simply an observation; regardless, the figure of Thais and the question of her influence recur.

When we combine our observations regarding these accounts, three common themes come to the fore, which set the stage for subsequent receptions of Alexander vis-à-vis Thais, and Persepolis. Firstly, to each ancient author Alexander's treatment of Persepolis is exemplary of his deeper flaws and vices. Be it drunkenness, susceptibility to flattery, or ambition, it is the Conqueror's inner daemons that drive him towards the impulsive destruction of the palace; Persepolis, in other words causes his darker attributes to manifest themselves. Secondly, the ancient tradition emphasizes the destructive power of Alexander's excess and drunkenness, which in the case of Persepolis extends far beyond an individual character flaw and becomes a vice with profoundly far-reaching consequences. Alexander becomes the antithesis of *sophrosyne*: he has no moderation when it comes to flattery, alcohol, or even the pressure of the crowd, and this produces actions that are similarly immoderate. Thirdly, the fact that Thais had such influence in the destruction of Persepolis is not so much an indictment of her character as it is proof positive of Alexander's failings. The reputation of Thais only figures prominently inasmuch as it sheds light, obliquely, on Alexander; that he was susceptible to the manipulation of not only the crowd, but a woman—and a courtesan at that—is ready testament to the depth of his flaws.

Yet at the same time, the ancient tradition serves to exonerate Alexander of the blame for the destruction of Persepolis in a practical sense. Responsibility for the event is transferred to Thais, who becomes something of a scapegoat

exercitus, quibus Europa inundata est, contabulato mari molibus perfossisque montibus, in quorum specus fretum inmisum est.

for Alexander's sins. All of the accounts, in their own way, highlight why Alexander was debilitated, and how his judgement lapsed so profoundly, as a result of intoxication, flattery, and popular opinion. The critical use of the passive voice in the narratives of Plutarch and Diodorus in particular makes Alexander seem like a puppet controlled, whose strings are pulled by a scheming Athenian women and the pleasures of the vulgar mob. Thais, not Alexander, thus becomes the driving force behind the intemperate destruction of Persepolis, even if Alexander tossed the first torch.

Interestingly, the flipside to all of this is that Persepolis and thus Achaemenid Persia become, to quote Thomas Harrison, "respectable in its ruins" as criticism of Alexander reveals an appreciation of the achievements of the Persians among the ancients that was perhaps not realized until the palace was destroyed.¹⁵ This takes a different form for each commentator: to Diodorus (17.72) it is the great achievements of the Persians juxtaposed against the levity and impulsiveness with which this great monument was destroyed by the Greeks that venerates Persia at the expense of Alexander. Plutarch (*Alex.* 38.1) instead tracks female influence as another source of corruption, and contrasts the episode of Persepolis with various other instances in which Alexander admired and respected Persian achievements. And Rufus (5.7.8), most explicitly, considers this as the defilement of a great and noble palace that represents the magnificent tradition of the Achaemenid dynasty. A seat of justice, the capital of a vast empire, and the home of great kings with an ancient pedigree fell victim to the adolescent impulses of the new world order. With such intense opinions among our ancient authors who created the tradition, it comes as little surprise that subsequent recapitulations of the destruction of Persepolis would remain so impassioned.

Following the Ancient Lead: Evolving Perceptions of Thais and Alexander after Antiquity

Tracing the subsequent receptions of Alexander, Persepolis and Thais becomes remarkably difficult given the proliferation of characters named Thais and their ambiguity. Menander's Thais was clearly an Athenian courtesan, though whether she is modelled on the woman who encouraged Alexander to set fire

15 Thomas Harrison, "Respectable in its Ruins: Achaemenid Persia, Ancient and Modern", *A Companion to Classical Receptions*, eds Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 50.

to Persepolis is unknown. Ariana Traill has extensively discussed the various appearances of characters named Thais in New Comedy as well as the subsequent Latin authors in which they appear—Ovid, Juvenal, and Propertius—and examines the scholarly tradition surrounding them in such detail that we need not recapitulate it here.¹⁶ The relationship between our Thais from Persepolis and these other homonymous literary women is too tenuous to address all of this literary material in the context of our current discussion. If we are unsure whether these women named Thais have any connection to Alexander at all, then we should exclude them from considerations of his reception. Compounding the issue is the curious figure of St. Thais of Alexandria, a wealthy fourth-century courtesan who is said to have converted to Christianity, abandoned her sinful profession, burned her trappings of wealth, and lived out the rest of her days in a cell in the Egyptian desert.¹⁷ This saintly Thais then went on to inspire an enduring literary and dramatic tradition beginning with Hrotsvit of Gandersheim and continuing through the novels of France and Flaubert to the opera of Massenet and its film adaptations.¹⁸

Given the diversity of these figures named Thais and their uncertain relationship to our Persepolitan courtesan, in the following I shall limit myself only to explicit depictions of Thais, Alexander and Persepolis. It is unclear whether the Thais who appears in the eighth circle of Hell in Dante's *Inferno* is our Thais or a later, literary figure; although, perhaps the nature of sin and punishment do provide some link with the fate of Persepolis. This Thais is mentioned among those flatterers who have exploited other people by manipulation. As a consequence they are punished by being covered in human filth, representing the treachery of their words. Dante describes her as "la puttana" who answered "absolutely" when her paramour asked her if she loved him. Perhaps her paramour is Alexander, and perhaps her sin of flattery was committed

16 Ariana Traill, "Menander's 'Thais' and the Roman Poets," *Phoenix* 55, no. 3/4 (2001): 284–303.

17 For full patristic references to St. Thais, see Francis Marshman, "St. Thais," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, accessed July 29, 2016, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14553d.htm>. Also, see the translations of sources for Thais and similar repentant figures in Benedicte Ward, *Harlots of the Desert: A Study of Repentance in Early Monastic Sources* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1987).

18 See the text of the play *Paphnutius* in Hrotsvitha, *The Plays of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim*, trans. Katharina M. Wilson (New York: Garland Pub., 1989), and the recent companion to her works: Phyllis Rugg Brown and Stephen L. Wailes, eds., *A Companion to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim* (fl. 960): *Contextual and Interpretive Approaches* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), especially the chapters contained in Part II of the volume.

when she convinced him to burn down Persepolis as our ancient authors would have us believe. In the end, though, the equation is highly speculative (Canto 18, 133–135).

The unhappy trio of Thais, Alexander, and Persepolis begin to appear more prominently in visual media at the close of the 16th century. Ludovico Carracci, an early Italian Baroque painter and printmaker from Bologna, composed a drawing in AD1592 of Thais and Alexander on their way to burn down the Persian palace.¹⁹ While Alexander is depicted with a burning torch in his hand, on closer examination it is clear that Thais is the driving force behind the event—and thus Carracci was following our ancient accounts quite faithfully.²⁰ Thais, barefoot in a low-slung dress, leads the armoured Alexander presumably in the direction of the palace, and thus she is quite literally leading the way. Alexander, for his part, has fallen under her spell and stares directly into the eyes of the *hetaera*. As in Diodorus and Plutarch, Alexander here is disarmed by the charms of Thais and becomes the pawn to her machinations—though whether the destruction of Persepolis is a good thing or a bad thing in this instance is unclear.

Another depiction of the pair by Carracci roughly twenty years later, this time with oil on canvas, captures the account of Plutarch almost perfectly. In this more vivid depiction the courtesan and Alexander are sat on a couch, and she bears in her hands the two instruments of his destruction: a cup of wine in one, and a flaming torch in the other.²¹ Thais seems composed, sober, and in control—a point reinforced by the vertical lines that dominate her figure. Alexander, for his part, seems to be intoxicated to the point of falling off the couch, and is shown holding on to a pole or spear for dear life. The look of confusion on his face further reinforces the dynamics of power in the scene, which depicts the moment described by Plutarch (*Alex.* 38.3–4) when Thais kindles the torch near the face of Alexander as she speaks her words

19 On the life and context of Carracci see Babette Bohn, *Ludovico Carracci: And the Art of Drawing* (Turnhout: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2004), and the entry on his family in Ian Chilvers, Harold Osborne, and Dennis Farr, *The Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 112–114. See also the relation subjects in the digital 5th edition of the same work, s.v. “Carracci”.

20 The drawing is currently held by the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC., part of the William Nelson Cromwell Fund 1975.55.1. Detailed biographical history and high-resolution images of the drawing are available at <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/Collection/art-object-page.55424.html>.

21 The painting itself, entitled *Alessandro e Taide* and dated to 1611, is currently held in the Palazzo Tanari in Bologna.

of encouragement. Again, the old theme recurs: Alexander is powerless and dominated, and Thais, whether for better or worse, is orchestrating the event.

At roughly the same time as Carracci was depicting Thais and Alexander, the pair makes a conspicuous appearance in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*—though this time Alexander falls under the romantic spell of Thais, not just sexual attraction. Fairly late in the play (following the 1616 Quarto and Act IV, Scene 1 of modern divisions of the text), Faustus conjures various spirits in order to amuse and impress Charles V. The Emperor asks for Alexander and “His Paramour”—again presumably Thais—and Faustus obliges, though requests that the emperor not ask any questions of the Conqueror but simply watch in silence (1265–1305).²² The stage directions tell the rest of their appearance: “*Enter at one door the Emperor Alexander, at the other Darius. They meet. Darius is thrown down; Alexander kills him, takes off his crown, and offering to go out, his paramour meets him. He embraceth her and sets Darius’ crown upon her head*”. The dynamics of power in the situation have now changed immensely: Alexander is consumed by Romantic love for his paramour (Thais), and seems subservient to her to the point of giving her the crown he has taken from the murdered Darius.

Thais is thus no longer a courtesan suggesting an act of vandalism, but a queen who has usurped a throne in her own right. At the same time, in the context of the play as a whole the pair are summoned because they represent those who are condemned to suffer eternally for their actions on earth. Thais is being punished for the act of Persepolis and her own misconduct, while Alexander is being punished for being so beholden to her. The destruction of Persia—symbolized in the sack of Persepolis—is their sin, for which they ought to be held accountable. A few decades after the publication of Marlowe's *Faustus*, however, Thais still does not enjoy any positive publicity. Thomas Herbert, in his account of his travels through Persia in 1627–1629, identifies her as “an infamous strumpet” responsible for the destruction of Persepolis; despite Marlowe's rather romantic version of Thais and Alexander, in more mainstream eyes she remained a prostitute.²³

Among the more vivid and explicit depictions of the pair can be found in John Dryden's 1697 ode “Alexander's Feast; or, The Power of Music” in honour of the Feast of St. Cecilia which was later used as the basis of Handel's “Alexander's

22 The text quoted here is taken from the 1616 Quarto of *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, edited by Dyce, and now available in the public domain via Project Gutenberg.

23 Herbert's reference to Thais as an infamous strumpet is in the context of his travels to Persia in 1627–1629, later published in his memoirs as Thomas Herbert, *Travels in Persia 1627–1629* (London: Routledge, 2005), 86.

Feast”.²⁴ While the symposiastic setting of the ode is similar to our ancient accounts, Dryden adds one pivotal figure who shifts the dynamic of power behind the palace’s destruction: the bard Timotheus. As a case study, as it were, of the power of music to influence human emotion, the bard’s performance arouses a variety of powerful emotions in Alexander—who again is an almost entirely passive figure. Timotheus begins by praising Alexander as divine and inflating his ego (16–37), then sings the praises of Bacchus and encourages (38–51) the king to drink heavily. Alexander follows the poet’s lead all too well and quickly becomes vain and belligerent (52–60) from the wine, leading Timotheus to change his tune and instead lament the ignoble death of the once-powerful Darius (61–74)—again echoing admiration of the Persians we find among the ancients. Lamentation of the enemy is then transformed by Alexander’s desire for consolation into love and lust for Thais with the next stanza. Dryden is unsubtle regarding the impressionability of Alexander when he writes ‘at length with love and wine at once opprest / The vanquish’d victor sunk upon her breast’ (96–97).

Timotheus, however, is not yet finished: with another stanza he rouses the delirious king from his slumber with a cry to avenge the memory of those Greeks who had fallen in battle during his campaigns (Give the vengeance due / To the valiant crew! (116–117)). In this interpretation of the episode, then, it was Timotheus rather than Thais who steered Alexander towards the destruction of the palace, again with the aid of the drunken crowd. The Greek princes, Dryden narrates, tossed their torches while pointing at the Persian buildings, and to sate the crowd’s thirst for vengeance Alexander then seizes a torch. It is Thais, however, not Alexander, who leads the procession to burn down the palace, and thus while Alexander was an eager participant he cannot be entirely blamed for the affair. The figure of Thais, for her part, has changed significantly from the previous iterations that we have seen above: she is Alexander’s lover, not a courtesan, who “sat like a blooming eastern bride” (10–11).

Perhaps the most significant lines of the poem for our current enquiry are those with which Dryden describes Thais’ role in the conflagration: she “led the way / to light him to his prey / and like another Helen, fired another Troy” (123–125). When we consider Dryden’s own views on the sack of Troy, his meaning becomes abundantly clear: Smith, a commentator on Dryden, observed that “in his translation of the *Aeneid*, Dryden describes the destruction of Troy not

24 I follow Palgrave’s text of the poem from 1875, now available open-access on WikiSource, with corresponding line numbers cited above. For a thorough analysis of the composition as a whole, see Ruth Smith, “The Argument and Contexts of Dryden’s *Alexander’s Feast*”, *Studies in English Literature* 18.3 (1978), 465–490.

only as the major catastrophe but as a barbaric and tragic outrage, and dwells on the desolation of the homeless Trojans with particular sympathy".²⁵ While the poem itself, read in isolation, seems relatively neutral towards the morality of the event, in this broader context of Dryden's work the destruction of the palace becomes a brutal atrocity. That both Thais and Timotheus instigated this makes them share in the guilt of Alexander for the desecration of the noble city. Dryden thus largely echoes the morality of Plutarch and Curtius Rufus to be sure, though with the addition of Timotheus as a responsible party. Alexander, for his part, remains a pawn in the designs of others.

From Harlot to Heroine: Rehabilitating Thais—and Alexander?

As the subject of Thais, Alexander, and Persepolis make the transition into the artistic world of 18th century Western Europe suddenly the lens of perception changes. While the artists and authors we have encountered above generally followed the moralizing lead of the Ancients, post-18th century depictions of the sack of Persepolis retain the substance of the story while dramatically modifying its interpretation. The most significant instance of the trend is Sir Joshua Reynolds' 1781 painting *Thais of Athens with Touroch*, currently held in Rothschild's collections of Waddesdon Manor.²⁶ Reynolds' choice of subject is interesting in and of itself, given his own theoretical discourses on the 'Grand Manner' style which focusses on the elevation of historical figures above ordinary existence by depicting their exceptionalism.²⁷ But the subject, if we are to believe the swirl of rumours that surrounded the piece's composition, was not chosen for purely historical reasons. Thais is considered by contemporary and modern commentators as having been modelled on Emily Bertie Pott, whose portrait was commissioned by her lover Charles Greville.²⁸ The pair had a falling out while Reynolds was still working on the piece, and Pott departed for India as the mistress of another man, Bob Pott, who worked for the East

25 Smith, "The Argument and Context", 477.

26 *Thais of Athens with Touroch*, 1781 by Joshua Reynolds, held by Waddesdon Manor, accession number 2556. For a full description and bibliography, see the work's entry on the Waddesdon Manor on-line catalogue at <http://collection.waddesdon.org.uk/search.do?view=detail&page=1&id=41445&db=object>, accessed 30 July 2016.

27 Chilvers et al, *Dictionary of Art*, s.v. "Grand Manner" and "Reynolds, Joshua".

28 Details of the context surrounding the piece's composition are taken from Philippa Plock's detailed 2011 commentary in the Waddesdon Manor catalogue, with full relevant bibliography. See the weblink in n. 26 above.

India Company.²⁹ Emily, however, died before reaching India in the spring of 1781, and no one was left to pay Reynolds for the portrait. The story then goes that Reynolds satirically depicted Pott as a courtesan, given the still-popular identification of Thais as a prostitute.

Regardless of the historicity of these scandalous elements, Reynolds depicts Thais in a vastly different light. Alexander does not even figure in the painting, though Thais seems to be looking back at those in her trail and beckoning them to join her in burning down Persepolis. Although Thais is clearly in motion, and depicted with the swirls and flourishes of fabric that we would expect from such a Rococo piece, she has an elegance and composure that had not yet been evident in depictions of Thais. She does not immediately come off as a besotted harlot grovelling at the feet of Alexander, but has a grace and independence that make her a fitting subject for Reynolds' Grand Manner. This 'classier' version of Thais—and by extension the event itself—to me is a contemporary response to her: in the increasingly liberated *milieu* of the closing decades of the eighteenth century, there must have been some resonance of the empowered, beautiful, and independent figure of Thais with the ideology of decadence and grandeur that characterized the epoch in artistic circles. Suddenly the qualities for which she was disparaged by the ancients become desirable in the eyes of some 18th century spectators. Reactions from the painting's first exhibition confirm this supposition, as according to his biographer Northcote, one critic praised Reynolds by saying that his work "had caught the very spirit of the heroine, and that she seemed rushing from the canvas to destroy Persepolis".³⁰

The word "heroine" has never before appeared in relation to Thais, but here we find her praised for the action by which she was condemned by the ancients. By extension, the destruction of Persepolis becomes a noble act in and of itself, perhaps representing the liberation of the East from Persian absolutism. Alexander, then, gains some measure of admiration by allowing it to happen and following the lead of Thais. If the destruction of the palace was a good thing, then Persepolis gains a negative association in the revised tradition, and the pair who were responsible for its destruction are exonerated of the guilt heaped on them by the likes of Diodorus and Plutarch. How far we have come, then from the *ebrium scortum* of Rufus and the *puttana* of Dante, to this heroine of the late eighteenth century. This rehabilitation of Thais and the episode in

29 Of course James Northcote vehemently denied the veracity of these rumours in his two-volume biography of Reynolds published in 1818: James Northcote, *The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, Vol. 2 (London: Henry Colburn, 1818), 118–122.

30 Ibid., 2.119.

which she was so involved continues through the nineteenth century, notably with an engraving by Simoni.³¹ In this, Thais stands out in the middle of the crowd as one of the few figures who is composed, upright, and generally noble in bearing—certainly compared to the visibly intoxicated Greek soldiers who are groping at naked courtesans. Alexander is clearly directing his full attention to Thais, though he does not seem particularly worse for the wear. While these depictions of Thais have not been entirely positive, at the same time they are not dominated by the scathing tones of ancient commentators—and so it is only two millennia after the event that it begins to become an object of admiration.

Conclusions: Modern Retrojections

To bring our survey of the episode's afterlife in western art and literature to a close, I wish to fast forward to the 21st century in search of the most contemporary depictions of Thais, Persepolis, and Alexander. Of course there are numerous scholarly interpretations of the destruction of the palace that have been posited in the previous decades, but I continue to limit myself to more 'popular' material. In general, the trend identified above persists: Alexander is increasingly written out of the episode in favour of putting Thais front and centre. In the process of making a heroine out of Thais, however, her target of Persepolis becomes vilified as a symbol of evil and oppression, while Alexander himself gains some measure of admiration for enabling the agency of Thais by his assent. In an ironic twist, it is only among the most contemporary commentators on the event that we find the sort of orientalism generally associated with the ancients.

We begin, of course, with the font of all 21st century receptions: the Internet. On *Dating.com*, of all places, Thais of Athens has her own page and description of her achievements.³² She is listed under the "escorts and celebrities" tab, a far cry from being consigned to the eighth circle of Hell. The description of her life extols her as the paragon of a famous *hetaera*, the picture of the classy escort. Instead of being blamed, she is "credited with" the destruction of Persepolis,

31 G. Simoni, '*Alexandre à Persepole*', engraving, 1889. Available open-access at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thais_calls_upon_Alexander_the_Great_to_put_the_palace_of_Persepolis_to_the_torch_by_G._Simoni.jpg.

32 'Thais of Athens, the Royal Escort', *Dating.com* Article published 29 August, 2011, accessed 15 Oct, 2011. <http://dating.com/about-escorts/escorts-and-celebrities/thais-of-athens-royal-escort.php>.

which again is testament to her character, not her vice. Alexander is nowhere to be found in the account. The end of this short entry on her life is also telling: “As for Thais? We have a feeling that she’s resting soundly, a progressive, intelligent woman who knew her worth, her value, and her place in an educated society.” All of this value, of course, is derived from her presence at the destruction of Persepolis.

The profile I have mentioned above, oddly enough, has been copied by a variety of other dating websites—including the charmingly-titled *SkipTheGames.com*.³³ This perception of Thais as a sexually liberated, strong, and intelligent woman can be found in several of the short articles dedicated to her on the Internet. If we track this in comparison with earlier depictions, it seems that her agency was adopted and enlarged in the Western Tradition (at the expense of Alexander and Persepolis), while her sexuality was brought to the fore and translated into influence over the Conqueror. By the 21st century, this independence and capacity for action is no longer a vice or something to be disparaged as it was to Plutarch, but instead she becomes an icon of empowered femininity and emancipation *avant la lettre*. It perhaps comes as little surprise, then, that the name *Thais Afinskaya* (*Таис Афинская*) is exceedingly popular as a handle on dating websites—particularly in Russia.

This iconicisation of Thais and magnification of her relationship with Alexander can also be found in the recent work of the Ukrainian model and artist Natalia Babi. In her correspondence with me, the artist herself explained that she seeks to fuse myth, legend, and history into her works that blend photography, painting, and digital imagery, leading to a series of works entitled “Wondrous Women”.³⁴ Among them we find “Thais of Athens, showing our *hetaera* reclining on a horse perched near decidedly Irish-looking cliffs wearing a flowing yet revealing dress”. In her caption to the image, Babi describes Thais as “the famous hetaera of the Ancient Greek Period, who was one of Alexander the Great’s contemporaries and companions on his conquest of the world”.³⁵ The caption goes on to identify her as “the one who burned down Persepolis” before recounting that she was worshipped as a god and became the ruler of Memphis. Other wondrous women who appear in the series include the Swan Princess, Esmerelda, Joan of Arc, Madame de Pompadour, Queen Tamara of Georgia, and Mary Poppins.

33 “Thais of Athens, the Royal Escort | Skip the Games,” Skip the Games Thais of Athens the Royal Escort Comments, accessed July 30, 2016, <https://skipthegames.com/articles/about-escorts/thais-of-athens-royal-escort>.

34 Author’s correspondence with the artist, 15 October, 2011.

35 See the images and accompanying captions at the artist’s website, www.nataliababi.com.

Yet the particular interpretation of the destruction of Persepolis and those involved in it which best captures the trajectory of the entire tradition in the western mind-set comes from an unlikely source: a soviet archaeologist, palaeobotanist, and science fiction author named Ivan Yefremov. Although best known for his utopian view of the future in *Andromeda*, Yefremov also penned a novel entitled *Thais of Athens* that was published posthumously in 1972.³⁶ The work was only translated into English in 2011, and I thank the translator, Maria Kuroshkepova, for her willingness to share her thoughts on the work as a whole as well as her knowledge of the author's biographical details. Throughout his life and literary career Yefremov dreamt of a harmonious society dedicated to advanced research and marked by peaceful, integrative social interaction. By all accounts the novel combined his philosophical and professional interests: after having read M. Wiler's *The Flames of Persepolis*, the Soviet archaeologist concluded that Thais of Athens was indeed present at the destruction of Persepolis, and that the event was undertaken in order to destroy the old loyalties separating East from West.³⁷ Accordingly he used the liberated figure of Thais to present his vision of human harmony, which resonated with Tarn's view of the unity of mankind attributed to Alexander.

For a work that claims to be extremely faithful to its historical inspiration, it is remarkable that *Thais of Athens* presents more or less the same narrative of the destruction of Persepolis as the ancient authors we have discussed above, while completely inverting their moral judgments regarding Persepolis and Alexander. What we would perhaps generally presume to be a very ancient brand of orientalism—the 'good' Greek West pitted against the 'bad' Persian East—that is markedly absent from our sources instead presents itself in this decidedly modern novel. Yefremov adheres to the notion that the destruction of the palace was at least partially the product of Alexander's rage at the mutilated Greeks he had encountered on his march and, after a short and easy battle to take the city, Alexander invites Thais along with his friends to enter the fallen Persian capital. The capture of Persepolis, in this re-telling, coincides with the safe arrival of seized Persian money at Ecbatana and, with Darius no longer a practical threat, the banquet hosted by the Conqueror celebrates what seems to be his total victory over the Persians.

Ancient sensibilities towards the palace are inverted almost immediately: as Thais enters, she finds the opulence of the Achaemenids arrogant, self-

36 Ivan Antonovich Yefremov, *Thais of Athens*, trans. Maria Igorevna Kuroshkepova (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (May 27, 2011)).

37 Author's correspondence with the translator, 11 October, 2011.

aggrandizing, and generally in poor taste compared to the more egalitarian standards of the Greeks; none of the unabashed admiration of Diodorus or Plutarch for the achievements of the Persians is to be found. Allegedly Greek sensibilities have been corrupted by the excesses of war and exposure to the alien *milieu*: in describing the revelry of Alexander's banquet, Yefremov mentions that Alexander's guests "were over-sated and spoiled by the availability of women ... women of any age, nation, skin colour, and taste had inevitably ruined the attitude toward a woman as something precious, an attitude cultivated in Hellas and adopted by the Macedonians".³⁸ Thais herself, of course, clearly stands out from the crowd given her beauty and grace, and even the Persians recognize her as "a treasure of Hellas". Alexander, for his part, is described as being "drunk with more than wine. He was inebriated by his glory, his success, and even more with his plans for the future".³⁹

Rather than being a symbol of past glory whose destruction captures the moral failings of Alexander, this modern narration instead casts Persepolis as a monument to the arrogance of eastern absolutism, starkly juxtaposed against the neoliberal sensibilities of the Greeks. After Thais turns down an invitation to dance from the festive Alexander, she first sings an old anthem about the Persian war and the sack of acropolis, before making a speech that seems to be an echo of Plutarch. The words Yefremov places in her mouth speak volumes:

"This city," Thais continued, "is the heart and soul of Persia ... There are no temples here, no gathering places for scientists or philosophers, no theatres, no gymnasiums ... There is nothing here except the arrogant, fat-faced royal bulls accepting gifts and processions of humble subjects. There are multitudes of columns forty elbows tall on a platform thirty elbows tall. All that just to elevate the rulers by humiliating the subjects. Is that why the crippled Helenians, Macedonians, and Frakians were brought to labour here? Is that why Xerxes and his vicious envoy brought blood and death to Hellas?"⁴⁰

38 This description of the banquet at Persepolis is taken from pp. 239–241 of the *Smashwords Edition* of the novel, downloadable as a PDF file.

39 Note that due to the fact that Kuroshchepova published Yefremov's work as an e-book, consistent pagination is not possible. Nevertheless, the quotations that follow are taken from Chapter XI of the novel, entitled "The Doom of Persepolis".

40 Quotation taken from Ch. XI, "The Doom of Persepolis", on p. 241 of the PDF of the novel downloaded from *SmashWords*.

Greece and Greek institutions are cast as inherently good, virtuous, and unselfish, in contrast to the cold, oppressive absolutism of the Persians made manifest in Persepolis. Good and evil meet quite literally in this environment, and the story of Thais becomes one of virtue triumphing over oppression and injustice. Reproaching the Macedonians by claiming that she is the only one who remembers the past atrocities committed by the Persians, she then asks Alexander for fire. The Conqueror obliges, offers a torch to her and takes one himself, and then the pair together launches the first brand that sets the palace alight. Instead of being exemplary of the vice of Alexander, Persepolis is now proof positive of the virtue of Thais, and thus the tables have turned. A woman's hands, contrary to the scorn of the ancients, spurred Alexander towards an act of violence that represented the ultimate victory of Greek enlightenment over Persian tyranny. Ancient orientalism, perhaps, at its modern-day best.

In the case of the reception of Alexander as it is with the reception of Antiquity more generally, it is striking how little the story itself has changed, and how the same set of ancient accounts have enabled such vastly divergent interpretations. The core of the narrative has remained fairly consistent, and remarkable in its potency, over the course of the twenty-three centuries since the Persian capital was destroyed. Alexander, Thais, and Persepolis have endured as powerful symbols of their contemporary milieu, though the precise meaning of these symbols has always been dictated more by the ideology and interests of later observers than by whatever their historical character may have been. They were, as so many other elements of Alexander's life and career, manipulated, embroidered, or outright used for whatever was momentarily advantageous or popular. Persepolis, to those ancients seeking to criticize the character of Alexander, won itself some measure of respect amongst the Greeks and the Romans as a symbol of past greatness and nobility only when it was destroyed. Its ashes were saddled with the grandeur of the past Achamenids. Thais was initially saddled with the blame for the palace's destruction and her very influence was another symptom of Alexander's failings. She was seemingly plucked from the bystanders and given such a pivotal role in the ancient narrative, in part to exonerate Alexander of blame for the event. In the process, she was given an agency and presence she perhaps never had. In all of her haughty inebriation, initially stood for much of what was wrong with the conquering Macedonian.

Alexander, for his part, remains equally passive in later recapitulations of the sack of Persepolis as he was in the ancient accounts of the fateful banquet. His susceptibility to the intoxicating effects of wine and female flattery allowed him to be pushed towards an event that was initially derided as an impulsive desecration. But ever so gradually, as perceptions and priorities changed and

Thais took on ever more prominence in the tradition he too was in some measure exonerated of guilt as she was rehabilitated. Rather than permitting what was once seen as an atrocity, he was now credited for enabling what by the twenty-first century had come to be seen as an act of righteous vengeance against past atrocities. Perhaps ironically, given how she initially figured in the narrative, over the past two millennia what was supposed to be the victory of Alexander at Persepolis, through a long and winding path, became the victory of Thais at Persepolis.

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Avoiding Nation Building in Afghanistan: An Absent Insight from Alexander*

Jason W. Warren

Alexander's fort teemed with activity. Its stone walls and elevated terrain provided security from sudden raids. Soldiers repaired and readied weapons. Logisticians prepared supplies. Leaders considered on-going and near-term operations. Soon it would be time to conquer or be conquered in a land marked by extreme weather conditions, and while awe-inspiring, some of the most rugged topography in the world. The Afghan army of 2013—not Alexander's Macedonian-Persian army—would soon leave the somewhat safe confines of an Alexander-era fort in southern Afghanistan, on yet another mission to find, fix, and destroy Taliban forces. Not far away in another province, the Afghan army would have been prevented from utilizing another Alexander-era structure, with its location in Taliban-controlled territory. Afghanistan has always been a place of extremes, whether political, religious, weather, or landscape. These conditions have posed problems for invaders up to present times.

The diverse nature of this unique territory is a fact as unchanging as the craggy cliffs of the Hindu Kush. The land encompassing modern Afghanistan in Alexander's time paralleled the region's current diverse peoples and places. From a military standpoint, controlling the area was vastly complicated as Alexander had to deal with different leaders and their idiosyncrasies and those of their peoples, instead of any centralized authority. NATO faces a similar situation today and struggles with the same issues of imposing centralized control on this historically disparate land. Alexander's Afghanistan consisted

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of ungoverned regions and parts of the Persian Empire that he had just dispatched, as well as territory influenced by Indian principalities and Scythian raiders.

The region furthest to the west in what is now Helmand province Afghanistan, encompassing modern-day Herat and Farah, were the Persian satrapies known as Areia and Drangiana. The border between these areas and the current Pashtun-dominated provinces of Afghanistan is now termed the Helmand River. The area east of Areia and Drangiana to the border of India and north to the Hindu Kush Mountains beyond Kabul was known as Arachosia, embodying today the most populous and heavily Pashtun regions of Afghanistan. Southern Bactria too, where Alexander campaigned after subduing Areia, Drangiana, and Arachosia, is part of modern Afghanistan. Bactra (aka Zariaspa) was then capital of that region, now coined Balkh, and just north of the highlands separating the city from Kabul and Begram, where Alexander founded another city in his name.¹

It is not my intent here to recount the varied and significant historiography of Alexander the Great, a project that is worthy of entire volumes. There are, however, some significant works that cover Alexander's campaigns in the region now known as Afghanistan. A.B. Bosworth's *Conquest and Empire*, still the salient modern account of Alexander, devotes a generous segment to Alexander in the East. Bosworth authored a more specific volume of Alexander in the region, *Alexander in the East*, where he accurately criticizes Alexander for a strategy of destruction. Bosworth aptly pointed out that Alexander destroyed entire villages to set an example for others. Where Bosworth was not a military historian however, Frank Holt provides a better military analysis of Alexander, in *Into the Land of Bones: Alexander the Great in Afghanistan*, specifically in the region of Afghanistan. My intent here is neither to copycat Holt's solid account nor Stephen Tanner's more general *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War Against the Taliban*, but to tie my own experience in Afghanistan directly to a historical account of the region's martial value, from Alexander to the present.² Alexander succeeded where the West more gener-

1 For this geographical description, I utilized the excellent map, "Map 4 Bactria and India," in the appendices of Arrian, *Alexander the Great, The Anabasis and the Indica*, trans. Martin Hammond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). The Arrian citations below derive from this version.

2 A.B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Bosworth, *Alexander and the East: The Tragedy of Triumph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Frank L. Holt, *Into the Land of Bones: Alexander the Great in Afghanistan* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006); Stephen Tan-

ally, and the United States more specifically, has failed. He did so by focusing strategically outward from Afghanistan's internal divisions instead of maintaining the U.S./NATO's internal concentration; by utilizing this historic crossroads as a transit area to other more critical regions rather than committing large resources to nation-building within, and by limiting Afghanistan's symbolic value to that of the Persian Empire's furthest far-flung region contra staking NATO's reputation to success of a central government in Kabul.

Afghanistan was rarely a place in which passing conquerors would remain, a lesson that American leaders failed to observe in the most recent war to mar the region. Afghanistan's value has always been of a symbolic nature. The circumstances of his dispatch of the Persian Empire, dictated Alexander's interest in the region. Once he had subdued Persia proper, Alexander's pretences as the new Great King, combining Greco-Macedonian culture with the eastern trappings of Persian Orientalism, demanded that he compel the old empire completely to submit. As such, Alexander was forced to conquer the eastern satrapies of the Persian Empire, including the region of modern day Afghanistan. In fact, as pretender to the Persian throne, Alexander had to establish a greater realm than Darius III, as the former's success ultimately became the arbiter for even larger glory in conquering the East beyond the bounds of old Persia. This was complicated further because Alexander was neither Achaemenid Persian (the traditional ruling clan) nor a religious observer of Zoroastrianism, as had been previous contenders for the kingship. To do so, Alexander had to invade India, the eastern edge of the known world at the time, to out-do his Persian predecessor, Darius. In fact, Alexander had claimed lineage from Heracles and thus had to seek otherworldly glory to approximate his example,³ which an adventure to India satisfied. Subduing Afghanistan's highlands was a prerequisite for such a lofty objective.

Alexander wished to inherit the Persian dynasty. The new emperor's treatment of the usurper Bessus, who with his cronies murdered Darius during Alexander's pursuit through Bactria—even as Darius was still the enemy of the Macedonians—indicated that Alexander envisioned himself as heir to

ner: *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War Against the Taliban* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2009). Also of note, Christopher Kolenda's chapter on Alexander in *Leadership: The Warrior's Art* is useful for Alexander's increasingly antagonistic actions to the Macedonians, as he moved to adapt his leadership and rule to various Persian and other "eastern" norms. Christopher Kolenda, *Leadership: The Warriors Art* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: The U.S. Army War College Foundation Press, 2001).

3 Arrian, 3.3.

the Achaemenid Persian dynasty.⁴ Alexander also protected Darius' royal family and married one of his daughters.⁵ Further, Alexander appointed Persian satraps to govern his freshly conquered empire in a way familiar with the old Persian elite, even if trustworthy Macedonians often wielded real power in a parallel chain of command.⁶ Bessus himself pretended to the Persian throne, according to Arrian, even wearing the "upright tiara" and naming himself Artaxerxes, harkening back to earlier Persian rulers.⁷ This behaviour caused his eventual humiliation in front of Alexander and his troops as they marched past a captured, chained, and collared Bessus on the roadside, after which he was executed in Bactria.⁸

It was not an easy campaign, however, as is always the case with military operations in Afghanistan. Alexander first subdued Areia, replacing the satrap there with Satibarzines, whom the young emperor's loyal troops supervised. As Alexander attempted to move forward, Areia revolted in his rear, as Satibarzines proved to be treacherous to the Macedonians and their newly won Persian allies. Taken by surprise at the rapidity of Alexander's countermarch, Satibarzines fled to Bactria in an attempt to join with Bessus, along with some loyalist Persians, resisting the Macedonian conqueror's advance. As Western forces have repeatedly attempted over the last two hundred years, Alexander again asserted control over Areia and moved on to Drangiana, and Arachosia, both of which readily submitted.⁹ With most of what is now Afghanistan under control, Alexander moved north from the vicinity of today's Kandahar in the south, toward Kabul in the north, through deep snows, which caused "his men suffering".¹⁰ The Macedonian-Persian army would not be the last to suffer the military trials and tribulations of Afghanistan's climate. Alexander moved north in preparation for his campaign into Bactria to confront Bessus.¹¹

To conduct these complicated and far-ranging operations in the uninviting terrain of Afghanistan, Alexander repeatedly both tailored and task-organized his forces to achieve his objectives. Tailoring consists of an overall sizing of forces to meet strategic objectives. To this end, Alexander dismissed some of his Macedonian contingent after extremely trying forced-marches after Darius

4 Arrian, 3.21.

5 Arrian, 3.22.

6 For example see Arrian, 3.25.

7 Arrian, 3.25.

8 Arrian, 3.30.

9 Arrian, 3.25.

10 Arrian, 3.27.

11 Arrian, 3.28.

and to the ends of the old Persian Empire. The Macedonians, many of whom had fought with Alexander since the first battle for a new empire at the Granicus, if not before in Greece, had experienced lots of hard fighting, and had become combat ineffective. Alexander tailored his force by "retiring" some of these gritty veterans back to Macedonia proper.¹² He also brought in a number of levies from the former Persian Empire to fill his ranks, while adding more capabilities suitable to the alternately vast expanses of steppe and mountainous terrain of the eastern reaches of the old Persian Empire. These included archers, mounted lancers, and most of all, more cavalry.¹³

These major alterations in force structure did not sit well with many of the Macedonians, as Alexander simultaneously and increasingly adopted the trappings of the eastern "King of Kings," if not those of a deity.¹⁴ As indicated, Alexander also appointed Persian satraps to rule, even if shadowed by loyal Macedonians. The addition of foreign levies, especially traditional Greco-Macedonian enemies, likewise heightened fears about Alexander's apparent transformation. Treacherous plots, real or imagined, occurred during his expedition to the Persian Empire's far East, such as the Philotas affair as Arrian has described.¹⁵ Alexander accepted the risk of Macedonian revolt partly for military purposes, as his Companion infantry phalanx and other foot soldiers proved too slow and cumbersome for the Bactrian and Scythian steppes.

In addition to tailoring his Army, Alexander conducted what today is termed task organization of his army for specific missions. For instance, in his pursuit of Darius and his captors, Alexander elected to dismount cavalry to make room for mounted infantry, in early-modern parlance, dragoons. This gave him a mixed mounted infantry, which could dismount to fight as well as being able to perform as a traditional cavalry force to better his chances of cornering Darius' party. The latter moved with alacrity in the wide-open spaces of the East.¹⁶ During his pursuit of Bessus, Alexander again task-organized, taking his fleetest infantry as well as archers in pursuit. Archers were the traditional arm of the horse-mounted forces of the steppe. As Bessus' captors waived, Alexander increased his rapidity of pursuit by finishing the journey with only cavalry.¹⁷ He also sent mounted javelin-men on one occasion to accompany

¹² Arrian, 3.29.

¹³ See Arrian, 3.22–3.30 for a number of examples.

¹⁴ Arrian himself bemoans this 4.7.

¹⁵ Arrian, 3.26–3.27.

¹⁶ Arrian, 3.21.

¹⁷ Arrian, 3.30.

a satrap. Alexander used his trusted mountain men, the Paeonians (often the sub-tribe Agrianians), from the outskirts of Macedonia itself (modern Bulgaria), as special forces on a number of occasions.¹⁸

After the “plots” were discovered in his ranks, Alexander divided command of his Companion cavalry and further divided the brigade command structure to avoid treachery.¹⁹ All of these changes to his units, at the strategic level with tailoring, and for specific campaigns, as task organization, foreshadowed modern concepts of military force structure adaptation. Indeed, joint-combined arms warfare was the practice in modern Afghanistan, where Airforce, Marine, and Army ground units operated in unison. Within Army structure, different branches, including Special Forces, worked in combined fashion to achieve certain campaign objectives, just as Alexander did during his approach to India.

Much of this activity transpired in Afghanistan, which became important as symbolic prestige to Alexander. There was very little wealth or strategic importance to this landmass, other than as a corridor for the new emperor's march to outer Bactria and thence to India. But as Darius and his successors had ruled the area, so too had to Alexander. The conquering of present day Afghanistan served to cement his authority over the new joint Macedonian-Persian empire—and beyond. Alexander depended on the road network, as primitive as it was, through the Hindu Kush to India, in order to extend his empire to the edge of the known universe. The only other alternative was a sea route along the coast, which was fraught with logistical and natural challenges (especially in the pre-open-oceanic seafaring times), as Alexander's army discovered on its return trip to Babylon.²⁰ In addition, Alexander was already on the Afghanistan-side of the Indian border, having defeated Bessus and temporarily solidifying his hold on the eastern stretches of the old Persian empire. Thus it was necessary to utilize the passes through the mountains for a landward approach into India and the unknown. It was, therefore, the use of Afghanistan as a symbol of Alexander's new reign and as a strategic crossroads to extend empire, which determined the region's necessity to the new Macedonian-Persian empire.

Alexander's Afghanistan, and likely the history of the region prior to its incorporation into his newly founded empire, foreshadowed the symbolic nature of future versions of the area, where what it meant to occupiers rarely reflected its true value in terms of natural or population resources. With the

18 See for instance Arrian, 3.21, 3.24, 3.29.

19 Arrian, 3.27.

20 See Arrian, *Indica*, 26. Babylon was Alexander's headquarters after India to the end of his life.

exception of the Turkic Ghaznavids, major empires avoided establishing permanent headquarters in the region, including those established by Indians, Mongols, and other Turks, encompassing the scenic valleys and lofty perches of the numerous mountain ranges there.²¹ At most, the region remained a backwater province of empire. Afghanistan only increased in relative importance during the “Great Game” of empire occurring in the nineteenth century, especially as it related as a border region to India.

By the late-eighteenth century, Great Britain established a global empire only rivalled by the previous Spanish-Habsburg’s regime of the 1500s, the latter of which was truly the first worldwide realm where the sun never set (and Great Britain subsequently adopted this claim). India, especially when viewed by backwater Afghanistan on the other side of the great mountains, soon became the jealousy-guarded jewel of the British Empire.²² India’s human and logistical capital was the envy of the world, and helped propel the cold rustic—though increasingly industrial—hinterlands of the British isles to world dominance. Britain combined the first great industrial revolution with hegemonic naval power, complemented by a small but smartly attired and trained professional ground force that could face a bevy of indigenous peoples worldwide, who resented British rule and economic prerogatives.

Romanov Russia, often viewed as the partial-Asiatic ogre of Europe, attempted to thwart the British span of control over its far-flung empire by threatening its land route in southwest Asia to India.²³ As Alexander had discovered in relation to India some two millennia prior to the Russians, Afghanistan was the land passage that could threaten British Indian holdings, if severed. Afghanistan also offered the prospect of a warm Arabian Sea port to ease Russia’s line of communication from the Baltic to Siberia. Britain faced setbacks in India during the late-nineteenth century, but never lost control of the crown jewel. The Romanov threat eventually receded when an aggressive Imperial Japan challenged its designs in the Far East, as well as with the distraction of socialist revolts in the motherland.²⁴

The Russians, however, never fully transitioned from viewing Afghanistan as symbolic to its empire. In the late 1970s, the Soviet empire, heir to the Romanovs, perhaps sought a distraction from autocratic rule at home. It was flush with the victory of its military beneficiary Vietnam over the United States. At the same time it feared the growing influence of Islamic extremism in its

21 Tanner, *Afghanistan*, 76–78.

22 Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 40.

23 Stachan, 13; Tanner, *Afghanistan*, 132, 202–203.

24 Strachan, 133.

southern reaches. Due to these factors, the Soviets sought an Afghan-Soviet client state in the Hindu Kush hinterland. Like would-be conquerors before them, the Soviets failed to establish a viable government in the notoriously heterogonous region, and suffered heavy casualties to U.S.-backed Islamists. Failure in Afghanistan helped precipitate the downfall of the Soviet empire. This should have served as a warning to U.S. global interests, while it foreshadowed Afghanistan's negative potential as a "graveyard" of empire for the West.²⁵

An emergent U.S. hyper-power did not imbibe the lessons of Soviet failure, and in a twist of fate that will continue to captivate historians, the anti-Soviet ghouls which the nation cultivated emerged under America's own bed. The Islamists gained control of a nominal Afghan-Taliban "nation" and supported even more extreme elements led by Osama Bin Laden and a few former members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in an "Al Qaeda" terrorist syndicate. Using the remote region as a lair for its nefarious designs, these religious-zealot global rebels emerged to wreak havoc with the attacks of 9/11.

Rather than refusing to take the bait that fatally hooked past empires, the United States, and the West more broadly, could not leave "well enough alone". The second George Bush Administration, ignoring its own platform swearing-off "nation building" abroad, initiated a lengthy and costly war that remains "hot" to this day. This was the Afghanistan situation I faced when I deployed to Kandahar in the late summer of 2012 during the final phase of the Barrack Obama Administration's "surge". In 2009, the Obama Administration had inherited the Bush Administration's failed policies in the region. In the spring of 2013, I departed Afghanistan with the same questions with which I had entered: what are the strategic objectives of the United States, and the West more generally, in this region?

Alexander had answered that question those millennia before by removing his temporary headquarters to Balkh on the outer rim and across the mountains from the mainstay of Afghanistan. Serving as the anchor point for his Bactrian and Scythian campaigns through Sogdiana and across the Oxus River toward the Aral Sea, Alexander quickly departed the dangerous terrain and climate in the axis of what is now Herat-Kandahar-Kabul. After founding Alexandria (Begram) in proximity to the present-day Afghan capital, he did not linger long in the deep winter snow that had caused great suffering and loss to his Army, and crossed the precipitous passes into northern Afghanistan to subdue Bessus,

25 Robert Doughty, Ira Gruber, et al., *Warfare in the Western World: Military Operations From 1871*, vol. 2 (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996), 954–959.

and later, the Scythians.²⁶ Helmand Province, ever a source of regional tension and treachery, revolted in Alexander's rear when Satibarzanes returned to launch the raid from Bactria. Alexander had to detach a Macedonian contingent, while he followed on a forced march, to put down the revolt. He replaced the turncoat satrap.²⁷

Alexander soon marched out from the capital at Bactra to pursue Bessus. The Persian pretender to the throne had attempted a scorched-earth campaign in the region adjacent to the Bactrian capital, destroying any natural resource that could be of use to the Macedonian-Persian army. Alexander again moved with rapidity, shaking the confidence of Bessus' supporters who ultimately betrayed him and took him into custody. Even then, Bessus' jailers hesitated until Alexander neared in force, and eventually Bessus was handed over in a collared and chained condition. This was the situation when Alexander humiliated Bessus by placing him in the stocks, while his army marched past to join the Scythian campaign.²⁸

The Scythians, a horse-nomadic culture who had raided the periphery of many empires, refused to observe the lesson of defeat that Alexander had taught the Bactrians. The fast-moving Scythians were notoriously difficult to fix in battle, as these horse nomads would simply move off into the remote steppe when battle did not favour them. Alexander was again able to configure his army with mounted troops and artillery (catapults) after a dangerous river crossing, however, to defeat the Scythian tribes of the southern tier of that territory. Rather than risk a campaign further into Scythia that distracted from his ultimate objective of subduing India at the edges of the known universe, Alexander demonstrated strategic discipline as he turned back his army to Bactra to regroup and prepare for the next difficult campaign. Thus northern Afghanistan, once again, served as an important road nexus for the region.²⁹

With the threat to his rear cleared and his army refitted, Alexander departed Bactra through the Kunar valley to realize his Indian designs. This region proved as problematic as it did for Soviet and U.S. forces in recent history. Film maker Sebastian Junger's well-regarded documentaries *Korengal* and *Restrepo* trace the travails of American units in the proximate Korengal Valley, facing a tenacious, difficult to corner adversary. Alexander did not linger west of the mountains, avoiding these mistakes, and launched his Indian campaign. The

26 Arrian, 3.28.

27 Arrian, 3.25; Satibarzanes led a second revolt and was killed in battle, 3.28.

28 Arrian, 3.29–3.30.

29 Arrian, 4.1–4.21.

approach to India also necessitated the subduing of the Swat River valley, another scene of modern fighting with both the Soviets and the United States' efforts in Afghanistan.³⁰

Alexander thus subdued Afghanistan with multiple campaigns. This included having to deal with revolts in his rear areas, the likes of which would continue to plague foreign forces there today. Although Alexander's famous marriage to Roxane and other princesses temporarily solidified his rule on these eastern-most satrapies of the new Macedonian-Persian Empire,³¹ it was the young emperor's understanding that the dangerous region was largely of symbolic value, as well as an important crossroads for further expansion of the empire, which aided his strategy. He chose to focus outward from Afghanistan not inward, as many would-be conquerors have failed to do in the millennia after his conquests.

The U.S.-led NATO effort continues in Afghanistan despite evidence indicating that the most recent version of the Great Game is, in fact, "up". Instead of viewing Afghanistan as its true worth in terms of human and economic capital, the West persists in doubling-down on its efforts to control an uncontrollable region. Just as Afghanistan was emblematic of Alexander's pacification of the Persian Empire, the West has attached symbolic value to the region in its efforts to counter Islamic extremism.

The reputation of NATO is also staked to this ancient region of the world that has changed only marginally since Alexander's reign. This was the first major operation outside of Europe for the organization and tested its inclusion of forces from Eastern Europe. The strategic result has been failure, as the Taliban's leadership fled to neighbouring Pakistan and was never defeated, and now has rebounded, while Islamists have also begun again to rear their extremist heads in the region.

The U.S.-led NATO ground war, after the initial successes of late-2001 and 2002, is now mired in a poorly conceived occupation and counterinsurgency. As a planner in my division headquarters eleven years into the conflict, I was struck by the fact that each unit entering Afghanistan was fighting its own war detached from previous campaigns (various commenters on the U.S. effort in Vietnam have said the same), and that various non-military U.S. agencies seemed to be fighting in a vacuum as well—and this was just in the southern sector of Afghanistan. Inward-looking, and hence fruitless, counterinsurgency operations were the mainstay of our NATO efforts, but U.S. military personnel

30 Arrian, 4.22.

31 For Roxane see Arrian, 4.19–4.20.

were discouraged from even using the term by 2012 for overtly political reasons. “No”, we were told, Western forces had moved into a new phase termed “security forces assistance”. I pointed out to no avail that this was simply the “build” phase of the “clear, hold, build” population-centric counterinsurgency (COIN) model, which had gained traction of late with Western militaries in Iraq. In such a model, the population of the host-nation becomes the target of military operations, which are sometimes non-violent, in order to win over the majority of the local population to the cause of the central government—this at the expense of the insurgents. I argued with a high-ranking American staff officer in our headquarters that we were indeed attempting to conduct a population-centric COIN campaign, of which we had entered the “build” phase, after clearing and holding conquered areas with U.S. forces from the so-called Afghanistan “surge”. The senior officer remained un-persuaded and toed the political line—he is now a major general. One of the senior military officers in our sector is now one of the senior officers in the Army.

The COIN campaign failed to advance as rapidly as these particular officers’ careers. The wrong metrics were used and often inflated to show progress. Afghan forces, however, particularly the paramilitary “police,” were never as numerous or competent as required to secure enough areas after Western troops, in joint operations with the Afghan Army, cleared them. Nor did these police units answer uniformly to the central government, undermining the Afghan government’s ability to “hold” areas that had been cleared. The Afghan Army itself was uneven, with some units performing better than others. Most Afghan Army units could conduct tactics, but lacked the literacy, planning, and logistical infrastructure to undertake campaigns. U.S. headquarters also viewed meetings, or “shuras” in local parlance, with local officials and tribal leaders as an end in themselves. The population never trusted the corrupt central government led by the opportunistic Hamid Karzai, which since the time of Alexander was more loyal to local tribal leaders of various factions than centralized rule. The fact that Alexander had to subdue four separate regions of what then consisted of Afghanistan confirms this reality.³²

NATO, distracted by Iraq and other fronts of the global war against Islamic extremism, was attempting to achieve what had been impossible over millennia. The fundamentally unanswered, strategic question as to the value of Afghanistan undermined these operational and tactical level efforts, which often became poor strategic objectives. The COIN model, employed to more success in Iraq, which had a history of viable central administration and an

32 Tanner, *Afghanistan*, 289–348.

identity as a nation-state, failed to transfer to polyglot Afghanistan. Unlike Alexander the strategist, who understood the value of the region as merely a symbolic waypoint (even if his overall objective of empire expansion to propel personal glory and legacy was at odds with the twenty-first century West's primary goals) the West continued to commit scarce resources in its global war with Islamists in this territory of dubious importance.

Western failure in Afghanistan and Iraq have also encouraged far more ruthless and decentralized Islamist threats around the world, in the form of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS or alternately the Islamic State of the Levant or ISIL), and its adherents. Far from stomping out training camps of extremists in Afghanistan, which was one of the major goals of the Bush Administration, the West's global war on terror has faltered with the migration of these staging areas. Insurgent cells now exist in nearly every part of the world, in part, inspired by the West's failure to tame Afghanistan. The West's insistence on elevating the relative worth of Afghanistan and thus to deal with the "critical" threat of its own creation, has ironically hampered worldwide efforts to curb Islamic-extremist enthusiasm. The success of these organizations in merely surviving the Western military onslaught since 9/11 also inspires "lone wolf" extremists, as we have seen with recent events in Paris, Brussels, San Bernardino, Orlando, and elsewhere. These extremists act on their own but are inspired and later claimed by parent organizations.

In addition to the symbolic nature of Afghanistan, it remains an important crossroads for transit into more fruitful areas. The value of a presence in Afghanistan—with achievable policy objectives—is the region's critical geography. As the West grapples with the likelihood of a nuclear-armed Iran, as well as the on-going nuclear stand-off between India and Pakistan, Afghanistan could be a critical diplomatic and military staging area focused outwardly, as Alexander did, not inwardly as NATO persists in its failed efforts. The oil-rich neighbourhood of the Caspian to the northwest of the Afghan frontier—Scythia during Alexander's conquest—also looms as a potential source of major conflict with a resurgent Russia. To the northeast, China threatens to dominate large swaths of the mineral-rich territory of Afghanistan's rugged mountains—one of the few areas of the country with economic potential. Afghanistan could maintain its critical position in a geo-strategic sense with an alteration of Western policy.

Instead of pursuing an under-resourced nation-building approach, pursued by both the Bush and Obama Administrations to varying degrees, Western efforts might have been focused on achievable goals. There were never enough troops in Afghanistan, even after the surge, to secure the population so that politics could flourish in support of a centralized government, in accord with

modern Western theories of COIN. This theory in its 2006 form guided the surge, and in one key section, specifically called for a 1–20 ratio (FM 3–24, *Counterinsurgency*, December 2006) between soldiers and population. With neighbours hostile to the West and Afghanistan's new regime on all sides, there were not enough military assets to monitor the long and porous Afghanistan border, let alone properly to interdict the routes into the country.

Pro-western elites, sought after to solidify the rule of central government in Kabul, had a bad habit of turning up dead. This was the case with Matiullah Kahn, the ruthless police chief of Uruzgan Province, not far from the Taliban's historic heartland of Kandahar Province. Kahn had once been the boy-lover of Afghan tribal leaders before him, aiding his promotion as he matured into adulthood. While pederasty flourished as it had in Alexander's time, law and order did not, as Kahn ruled as police chief with a ruthless hand. My peers and I joked in the headquarters that Kahn was a cat with nine lives, as he had survived numerous assassination attempts, including one in which he tackled his own would-be suicide bomber. Kahn had been visiting his mother when the bomber ambushed him. The rumour at headquarters by late 2012, however, was that he increasingly feared that his luck had run out. Kahn was later killed in Kabul, and the loyalty of his former police force has never been fully recovered by the central government.³³

The life and times of Matiullah Kahn is a microcosm of the millennia-long trouble with subduing a rugged, clan-dominated region. With numerous reports of Afghan men having sex with boys openly in their farm fields, as Western convoys pass by, this speaks to the obvious cultural differences between the West and Afghanistan. The West has largely suppressed these cultural variances to construct a narrative of progress for distracted Western audiences. These populations might question the feasibility of supporting such an alien culture, and thus of the prospect of having any real impact on the way the Afghans conduct politics. Eradicating Afghan culture, as the Soviets failed to do by wielding an iron fist in the late 1970s, is impermissible by current Western moral standards. The West would not tolerate the destruction of the kind wreaked on Imperial Japan by the American bombing campaign, for instance, only 70 years after its conduct. The idea of devastating a population to "save it" or to "make a desert and call it peace",³⁴ as the ancients once called a certain kind of COIN, is rightly prohibited. Thus Alexander's terror campaigns, where he wiped-out

33 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/20/world/asia/powerful-afghan-police-chief-killed-in-kabul.html>, accessed 28 September 2016.

34 Tacitus, *Agricola*, 30.5.

entire cities as an example to those yet conquered is impermissible to military practitioners today.³⁵ With contemporary Western mores negating the “hard hand of war”, and with population-centric COIN being a fool’s errand given decisions over resources and a lack of will, there are few options for success. In the different context of Alexander’s conquest of the rump Persian Empire, the young emperor conducted a brilliant strategy of conducting a campaign in Afghanistan, which reflected only its symbolic and transit-related significance.

Afghanistan’s initial reception of Alexander the Great was more positive than the reception of both Soviet and Western forces of the modern era. Although partially cowed into submission by Alexander’s widespread destruction of certain areas, the military and political reputation of the young emperor also gelled, at least temporarily, support for his movement to the east and eventually India. Marriage politics as well, with Alexander’s marriage to Roxane, played a role no longer possible given the lack of family-dynastic politics that was the world diplomatic norm through the First World War. This dynamic assisted the youthful conqueror in his quest to subdue the known world under his standard. As such, the territories encompassing present-day Afghanistan served as not only a vital crossroads to achieve this aim in India at the edge of the then known world, but also as symbolic value for the submission of the old Persian Empire. Not since the days of Romanov Russia’s attempts to thwart Great Britain’s sub-continental hegemony has Afghanistan maintained more than symbolic value or that of a strategic transit area. Even the emblematic effect of a failed NATO mission in today’s geopolitical climate does not measure the value of these previous eras, especially Alexander’s. As such, the West has failed in the contemporary world to garner insights from Alexander’s strategic appraisal, which holds true to modern times—Afghanistan itself is not worth a major strategic effort and an outward vision of the country is far more suitable strategically than in inward focus. With history as its cement, Alexander’s fortresses, still occupied, but in this case by modern Afghans loyal to the central government, will survive into the future. These time-weathered fortifications will very likely witness other occupiers, with other goals, in probable folly, attempting to conquer this indomitable hinterland known as Afghanistan.

35 See Thebes 335 BC, Mallian people 325 BC, Arrian 1.7, 1.8, 6.11.



FIGURE 30.1 *Map of Bactria*
PUBLIC DOMAIN, [HTTPS://COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/W/INDEX.PHP?CURID=1559381](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1559381)

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The Artist as Art Historian: Some Modern Works on Alexander

Ada Cohen

The persistence of Alexander's fame is a strange and fascinating phenomenon, visually instantiated through images of various kinds—especially public sculpture—in continuing if discontinuous production. We may explain it largely by way of Alexander's military genius and his success in swiftly conquering the vast Persian empire, reaching as far east as India. Of course, imperialism and conquest are arenas that, unsurprisingly, have lost their glamour in the modern world, in which the recognition that victories rest on horrific acts of violence looms large in the minds of many. Furthermore, historians have problematized the “great man” approach to history in light of which military history is often written. Yet Alexander has never suffered the sort of *damnatio memoriae* that has toppled monuments to other world conquerors, while new monuments continue to be erected.

Alexander's enduring popular appeal may also be partly associated with his charismatic (though flawed and imperfectly understood) personality and the impression we derive from the historical record that he was not just a brutal conqueror but also possessed some human complexity, including aspirations to the life of the mind. Homer's *Iliad*, for example, served as an inspiration in times of war and peace and was a source he quoted at key moments. When Alexander ran out of things to read in Asia, he reportedly had books of poetry, history, and drama sent from home. His literary outlook and his association with the philosopher Aristotle distinguish Alexander from other world conquerors and must partly account for his persistent hold on the European imagination and the complexities of reception it has engendered.¹ Even more astonishing is his popularity (beginning in the Middle Ages) in the East, in places he had violently conquered. His infusion of public life, when alive, with a strong dose

1 See Nicos Hadjinicolaou, ed., *Ο Μέγας Αλέξανδρος στην Ευρωπαϊκή Τέχνη* (Thessaloniki: Institute of Mediterranean Studies, 1997), 25–42 on positive and negative assessments of Alexander as well as the discontinuities in artists' engagement with him. For a historical perspective, see Eugene N. Borza, “Alexander the Great: History and Cultural Politics”, *The Journal of the Historical Society* 7:4 (2007): 411–442.

of theatricality, together with his youth, also contributed to his widespread fame. Furthermore, despite his elite status, he is typically remembered outside the parameters of class, as a sort of everyman's hero.

What visual apparatus secured Alexander's place in collective memory? There is much that we wish we knew about the specific circumstances under which his images were made and disseminated both while he was alive and in the aftermath of his premature death. Literary sources offer tantalizing glimpses into his interest in controlling the visual media as well as the subtle ways in which Hellenistic and Roman notables incorporated references to him within their own images and self-presentations.² With a lot of effort and with much speculation, art historians seek to interpret ancient works in light of historical information, predominantly textual, which helps establish contextual messages the works presumably proclaim. At the same time the persistence of ancient motifs (often in a naturalistic but idealized equestrian mode) in Alexander's post-antique imagery "dehistoricizes" the history of art to some extent.

In this paper I explore a small number of modern works—both well-known and less so but certainly little-studied—that bear rich connections with the past and Alexander's own ancient imagery. They constitute interesting cases in the history of his reception while being themselves interestingly "received". Their very engagement with Alexander is in certain cases readily understandable but in others unexpected. They exemplify different but interrelated angles within the framework of reception and attendant modes of viewers' identification with this historical figure. Moreover, each in its own way has required that the artist not only take a stance on history but also purposefully review and assess the history of art—thus acting as an art historian of sorts—in order to realize his own perspective. Examined together, these works demonstrate the uncanny ability of Alexander to signify within a wide range of contexts and variable horizons of cultural and historical expectations. Especially interesting are the group dynamics and cultural politics that some works, notably those situated in Greece, activate in response to conflict.

A long time ago, the literary theorist Hans Robert Jauss, one of the founders of reception theory, in his exploration of the aesthetics of reception and its

2 See now Martin Kovacs, "Imitatio Alexandri—Zu Aneignungs- und Angleichungsphänomenen im römischen Porträt", in *Imitatio Heroica. Heldenangleichung im Bildnis*, ed. Ralf von den Hoff et al. (Würzburg: Ergon, 2015), 47–84. On the influence of Alexander's portraiture on the depiction of mythological characters, see Anna Trofimova, *Imitatio Alexandri in Hellenistic Art: Portraits of Alexander and Mythological Images*, trans. Paul Williams (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2012).

scholarly history, also engaged with the concept of “identification of hero and audience” and insightfully differentiated five modes, which he intuited from historical observation and the study of literature.³ Four—admiring, associative, sympathetic, and ironic—are especially relevant in the present context and will help us frame the discussion. Although it bears interesting links with Plato’s and Aristotle’s exploration of human responses to misfortune, another—cathartic—is less relevant here. Jauss formulated all five with reference to literary heroes and described nuances and examples that are operative only in textual contexts. Nevertheless, the typology he introduced is at a simpler level relevant to the visual arts as well.

Jauss brought attention to the audience’s participation in constructing a text, thus shifting attention away from the author. The main contention of reception theory is that the audience’s (or by extension viewers’) interpretive work constitutes another level of meaningful production. In the present context the perspectives of the artist and of the viewer (for the most part by necessity an *ideal* or *implicit* viewer⁴) are equally important and will emerge primarily from the works themselves. When possible, *historical* viewers will be invoked as well.

Most of the works I consider are public monuments. At stake are the ways they have “received” Alexander but also the ways their audiences receive *them*. Public monuments, as is well recognized, are only erected to the successful. It is, I believe, a general, mostly apolitical, version of success that the first monument conjures up. Currently tucked inside the courtyard of the City Chambers on Edinburgh’s High Street, John Steell’s acclaimed sculpture *Alexander & Bucephalus*—title inscribed in capital letters on the south side of its tall stone pedestal—was “modelled [in] 1832” (fig. 31.1). It was not cast in bronze until 1883, as noted on the pedestal’s west side. An inscription on the east side tells us that the subscribers presented it to the city in 1884 (fig. 31.2). Indeed, the requisite funds were raised in the 1880s by public subscription, while the Town Council of Edinburgh also contributed, making this a truly communal, citizen-based undertaking.

3 Hans Robert Jauss, “Levels of Identification of Hero and Audience”, *New Literary History* 5 (1974): 283–317.

4 Discussion in Wolfgang Kemp, “The Work of Art and Its Beholder: The Methodology of the Aesthetic of Reception”, in *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holy, and Keith Moxey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 181–188.



FIGURE 31.1 *John Steell, Alexander and Bucephalus, bronze; City Chambers, Edinburgh, 1883*
PHOTO ADA COHEN



FIGURE 31.2 *John Steell, Alexander and Bucephalus, bronze; City Chambers, Edinburgh 1883*
PHOTO ADA COHEN

It is surprising to encounter the key Alexander story that is the subject of the group, the taming of Bucephalas, in Scotland.⁵ The story is best known from Plutarch (*Alexander* 6), who explains that no one among the associates of King Philip II, Alexander's warrior father, could ride the beautiful and expensive but disobedient horse that the Thessalian Philonicus had brought for sale: no one, that is, except for the adolescent Alexander, who tamed the horse in a bet with his father. He did so by resorting to a brainy solution: he turned the horse's head towards the sun so as to divert it from looking at its own shadow which, he had noticed, was the source of the animal's agitation. This incident announced Alexander's greatness and ability to rule to his father and to the world. Many centuries later the people of Edinburgh derived an enduring moral from its depiction.

John Steell's Alexander and his horse are caught in the midst of action. Bucephalas is daringly shown rearing in a state of agitation, mouth and nostrils open wide. He has a muscular body and an exaggeratedly thick and curly tail, styled not that differently from Alexander's own hair. Steell rejected the tail's use as structural support—it comes close to the base without touching it. By contrast, his equestrian statue (unveiled in 1852) of the Duke of Wellington, victor at Waterloo, on his horse Copenhagen, features a weight-bearing tail, as seen outside Register House in Edinburgh.

Steell's Alexander calmly moves right next to the horse, feet firmly on the ground, touching the animal's neck with his outstretched left hand. With his right he pulls on the reins, which, however, are only hinted at rather than being fully depicted. A piece of cloth is wrapped over the youth's back, leaving the right back side and the chest bare, swerving strategically to cover his genitals, then becoming overly long and extending under the horse's belly. A disparaging comment in *The Builder* of 26 April 1884 characterized it as a sheet more than a garment (also criticizing the absence of reins). Illogically long though it is in the front, it succeeds in linking man and horse into a unit and clearly

5 On the historicity and the particulars of the story, see Andrew Runni Anderson, "Bucephalas and his Legend", *American Journal of Philology* 51 (1930): 1–21; Elizabeth Baynham, "Who Put the 'Romance' in the Alexander Romance? The Alexander Romances within Alexander Historiography", *Ancient History Bulletin* 9 (1995): 5–9. On Bucephalas see also Hadjinicolaou, *Μέγας Αλέξανδρος*, 188–201; Rolf Winkes, "Boukephalas", in *Miscellanea Mediterranea* (*Archaeologia Transatlantica* 18), ed. R. Ross Holloway (Providence: Center for Old World Archaeology and Art, 2000), 101–107; Christophe Chandezon, "Bucéphale et Alexandre. Histoire, imaginaire et images de rois et de chevaux", in *Histoire d'équidés. Des textes, des images et des os*, ed. Armelle Gardeisen, Emmanuelle Furet, and Nicolas Boulbes (Lattes: Association pour le développement de l'archéologie en Languedoc-Roussillon, 2010), 177–196.

serves to enhance the statue's stability. It is on the portion of the cloth beneath the horse that the sculptor signed his name ("JN STEELL Sculpt"). The viewer in command of the sources may discern a narrative dimension by recalling Plutarch's contention that Alexander dropped his cloak as he moved to mount the horse for the first time. The long cloak may thus serve to enhance this viewer's anticipation for the climax of the story.

Alexander, his leonine mane of hair fanning outwards away from his forehead, is strong and muscular but convincingly youthful. According to contemporary accounts, his head was patterned after a bust in a Florentine Gallery, possibly the *Dying Alexander* in the Uffizi.⁶ This work, its emotive head upturned, had been held in the Uffizi since the end of the 17th century. In the Edinburgh group, Alexander's hallmark upward turn of head serves the narrative purposes of the taming incident. The sculpture seems to capture the moment when Alexander, by touching (stroking?) the animal, establishes their special rapport, prior to mounting it (Plutarch, *Alexander* 6.4). Alexander looks up in order to assess the horse's reaction to the manipulations that led to the taming.

Between the lengthy process of design, which began in 1829 in clay and then plaster (1833), and the casting of 1883,⁷ there was ample time for the Edinburgh public to develop the certainty that Alexander was a suitable model for their city, which, moreover, aspired to be the "Athens of the North" and which had also (unsuccessfully) attempted to build a copy of the Parthenon.⁸ By the time of the casting, the sculptor had long emerged as a favourite of Queen Victoria, "Her Majesty's sculptor for Scotland", indeed the most famous Victorian sculptor in Scotland and one who built an international career, reaching as far as New York City.⁹

6 *The Art Journal* 1882: 348 and 1884: 376; see also Rocco Lieuallen, "A Sculptor for Scotland: *The Life and Work of Sir John Robert Steell, RSA (1804–1891)*" (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2002), vol. 1, 102 on the specific work in the Uffizi.

7 There is an unsupported theory that Steell was upset at the delay and the payments he received and, in protest, gave Bucephalus pig ears prior to the casting. See, e.g., Stephen McGinty, "The Pig Ear Theory on Edinburgh Bucephalus Statue", *The Scotsman*, June 26, 2014. The origin of this train of thought must have been the historical Bucephalus, as one of the explanations of his name was that his ears resembled the horns of a bull; see Andrew F. Stewart, *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), 137 with n. 45. See also n. 19 below.

8 William St Clair, "Imperial Appropriations of the Parthenon", in *Imperialism, Art and Restoration*, ed. John Henry Merryman (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 70–73, figs. 4.3, 4.4.

9 Steell's career and works have been thoroughly examined by Lieuallen, "Sculptor for Scotland"; on *Alexander and Bucephalus* see (in vol. 1) 7, 11, 26, 96, 99–121; in vol. 2 see 2.

In the immediate aftermath of the monument's unveiling on April 18, 1884, the Tercentenary of the University of Edinburgh, the newspaper *The Scotsman* repeated the often-made point that the sculptor's intent was to show the "predominance of mind over brute force", a sort of universal message.¹⁰ This point had already been made earlier, undoubtedly as an argument for public participation, as subscriptions were being collected under the guidance of a committee. The call went out to "Britain, America, and The Colonies" and succeeded in making permanent a work "regarded by the best judges of Art as the most successful work of the kind ever executed in Scotland".¹¹

The sculpture was installed not at its current site, where it is densely surrounded by the imposing Π-shaped stone building of the Town Council, but in the open area of St. Andrew Square, where it looked toward George Street, a prestigious location otherwise embellished with statues of Scottish and British notables. A photograph of ca. 1900 by George Washington Wilson captures the monument from the east side in the spacious environment of the square.¹² In its current location, where it was installed in 1916, it stands alone: an unexpected vision, three meters tall, as one goes through the stone arcade that fronts the building and screens it from the street.

Steell began his work as a kind of debut piece after his return from his 1829 trip to Rome. Unfortunately, the trip is very little documented, but undoubtedly in Rome he had had occasion to observe, and be influenced by, a plethora of ancient public monuments, such as the two colossal horse tamers that still stand at the Piazza del Quirinale on the Quirinal Hill, also known as Monte Cavallo. The two marble pairs of man and horse, popularly known as the Dioscuri because of the duplication, are believed to be Roman copies of Greek works. Among other interpretive possibilities, these figures are known as Alexander and Bucephalas, a prominent identification since the mid-16th century. Possibly originally made for the Baths of Constantine, the statues are believed to have stood on the Quirinal (where the baths were located) continuously since

10 *The Scotsman*, April 19, 1884; *The Art Journal* 1884: 376.

11 See the anonymous article titled "Sir John Steell's Alexander and Bucephalus", *The Art Journal* 1882: 348.

12 Photograph Album No. 195: George Washington Wilson Album, p. 133, photo DP 148049; see <http://canmore.org.uk/collection/1319835>. By that time the four lamp posts that used to frame the monument in the years after its placement at the square had been removed. See the photograph of the monument with lamps included in volume 4 of the John Steell scrapbook, FB.m.55, in the manuscript archives of the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh; see also *Edinburgh Evening News*, 20 May, 1884 on the erection of the lamps.

antiquity.¹³ They became a source of inspiration for a number of later European sculptors who created images of horse tamers in small scale.¹⁴ In contrast to Steell's work, the men are nude, with drapery covering their left forearms. Each raises one arm. Steell's Alexander is smaller in relation to the horse and appears younger, with longer, more fluid hair and a more animated disposition.

An Etruscan bronze statuette in Florence, dated in the 4th century BCE, conjures up a narrative much more actively than the Rome horse-tamers and has been interpreted in the light of Bucephalas' story.¹⁵ It shows a mostly nude male figure on foot, possibly Alexander (but if so without his hallmark *anastole*) poised to turn the head of the horse, his own head leaning towards the animal, his arm raised. The overall composition is not too different from the Edinburgh statue. The figure stands on his left leg, the right bent at the knee. A piece of drapery covers the upper part of his left thigh, leaving the genitals exposed. The horse stands on its back legs, lifting the front. This statuette of a horse tamer seems to have been known in the 19th century though it is unclear whether Steell was acquainted with it. It is possible but not certain that while in Italy he travelled to Florence, where he might also have seen the *Dying Alexander* mentioned above.

In Rome itself the story of Alexander and Bucephalas was famously also known from its rendering on the west wall of the Alexander room in the Villa Farnesina, frescoed in the Renaissance by the painter Il Sodoma. This particular section of the fresco was executed by another artist and contextualizes the event in the vicinity of the Basilica of Constantine in Rome, Alexander having already mounted the horse, which is here rendered white rather than dark as reported (Arrian, *Anabasis* 5.19.5).¹⁶ Of course general equine imagery, separate

13 Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500–1900* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), 136–141, figs. 71, 72; Görel Cavalli-Björkman, "Adriaen de Vries's Horses. An Imperial Prerogative", *Art Bulletin of Nationalmuseum Stockholm* 6 (1999): 66–67; Trofimova, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 121–122. On the possible influence on Steell, Lieuallen, "Sculptor for Scotland", vol. 1, 112–113 and vol. 2, 6. Lieuallen (vol. 1, 115–116) also proposed Bertel Thorwaldsen's plaster reliefs of 1812, titled "Triumph of Alexander" and held at the Palazzo Quirinale, as possible source for the rendering of the horse.

14 Trofimova, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 121–123 with fig. 139.

15 Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 79904–25; Paola Stirpe et al., *Images of a Legend: Iconography of Alexander the Great in Italy* (Rome: Gangemi, 2006), 130–131; cf. another 4th-century Etruscan group in the Hermitage Museum (B 1203) (Trofimova, *Imitatio Alexandri*, 123, fig. 138) and one in the Antikenmuseum in Basel (Kä 523).

16 On whether Bucephalas was black or brown, see Winkes, "Boukephalas", 103–107.

from the depiction of the taming of Bucephalas, was a likely source of influence for Steell, for instance the horses on the Parthenon, which were readily accessible to the sculptor in Edinburgh in the form of plaster casts.¹⁷

Steell's monument represents two entirely different moments in the sculptor's career, youth and old age, and in its history proffers a paradigm of success and endurance. Already when working on his original large-scale plaster model, Steell attracted considerable attention for his skill and was particularly praised for this spirited rendering of Bucephalas.¹⁸ Exalting articles in the *Caledonian Mercury* of 1833 demonstrated some interest in ancient sources, commenting on Bucephalas' equine rather than bovine head despite his name, in addition to praising the group's beauty, grandeur, and narrative clarity, contending that "like Minerva from the head of Jupiter, it has come forth perfect, or very nearly so, in all its proportions".¹⁹ "Even antiquity itself has bequeathed to us few things superior to this."²⁰

That this work fully subscribes to Jauss' admiring mode of reception is supported by the delighted reactions of the original audience to the statue and its subject. Admiring identification "arises in relation to the perfection of a model" and brings about astonishment at the model's accomplishments.²¹ Furthermore, it requires some reflective distance. Historical admirers of the final bronze included a large crowd of "ladies and gentlemen" invited to the foundry to witness its casting in sections (nine times copper to one of tin, as typical of the sculptor). But even fifty years earlier the work had attracted the public in the form of the plaster model, which was awarded a prize by the Board of Trustees for Manufactures and was exhibited at the Royal Institution to general acclaim (as an "incomparable work of Scottish art"), inspiring other artists, who copied it in drawings. Small-scale bronzes were also executed for elite buyers, four being known today in private collections.²² An early plan to

17 Lieuallen, "Sculptor for Scotland", vol. 1, 93, 95, 111–116.

18 *Literary Journal*, 16 April, 1831; see also 16 July, 1831.

19 *Caledonian Mercury*, 20 May, 1833. According to Arrian, Bucephalas' name was derived from the head of an ox with which he had been branded. He also mentions an alternative tradition whereby the presence of a white mark on an otherwise black forehead recalled an ox (*Anabasis* 5.19.5). On the various assumptions on the origin of the name, see Anderson, "Bucephalas", 3–10, Winkes, "Boukephalas", 101, 103, and Chandezon, "Bucéphale", 178–181.

20 *Caledonian Mercury*, 18 May, 1833.

21 Jauss, "Levels of Identification", 303.

22 *The Scotsman*, March 2, 1883, 3. On the known surviving examples, Lieuallen, "Sculptor for Scotland", vol. 2, 124 (nos. 159–162).

carve the statue in local freestone did not materialize, most likely because the success of the original plaster version led to a plethora of private commissions that diverted the artist.²³

The delight and admiration expressed by the citizens of Edinburgh, in whose name the large-scale bronze was executed, was primarily directed at the work, but the work brought attention to Alexander. The story of the taming of Bucephalus had clear imperialist implications, given Philip's conclusion that Macedonia was too small for his ingenious son to rule. However, the patronage of the sculpture and its reception do not voice any direct political, nationalist, or imperialist message (except in the most general of senses: pride in the accomplishment of Scottish art). Of course the absence of documentation need not stop us from advancing the possibility of such a message. A long time ago the art historian Erwin Panofsky noted the contribution of "documents", "primarily to secure the phenomenal understanding of the given artistic phenomenon" in the pursuit of meaning, also noting documents' potential "corrective function" on our interpretive intuitions.²⁴ But he also argued that documents do not suffice in establishing meaning, and, conversely, that their absence does not preclude a certain interpretive direction.

In our case neither documents nor the sculpture's pictorial emphases encourage an argument in light of imperialist aspirations. Although Alexander was surely capable of helping the citizens of Edinburgh build an "empire of the imagination",²⁵ nothing in the statue's reception points to this having been the case. Rather, Steell's Alexander, seems to have been predominantly a product of the history of art, an outcome of the artist's voyage to Rome—a crucial, formative experience in terms of the direct contact with antiquity—and of his audience's appreciation of neoclassicism in style and subject matter. Newspaper accounts emphasize the sculptor's personal genius and independent spirit, his labour for fame rather than profit.²⁶ To mention these points is not to argue for the autonomy of art, as art is always attached to a set of circumstances. It is rather to acknowledge that the circumstances were not aggressively political in this case. It was important within its framework of reception that the monument was "highly classical, both as regards conception and execution".²⁷ At

23 Lieuallen, "Sculptor for Scotland", vol. 1, 118–119.

24 See Erwin Panofsky, "The Concept of Artistic Volition", *Critical Inquiry* 8 (1981): 32–33 (trans. Kenneth J. Northcott and Joel Snyder, original publication in German in 1920).

25 Holger Hooch, *Empires of the Imagination: Politics, War and the Arts in the British World, 1750–1850* (London: Profile Books, 2010).

26 *Caledonian Mercury*, 20 May, 1833.

27 *The Art Journal* 1882: 348.

a later time, when classicism had lost the automatically positive associations that many Victorians attached to it, the work was deemed “Classical but far from frigid”.²⁸

Both classicism and its rejection were of course broadly political, but in this case the emphasis should be on “broadly”. Diffuse frameworks that have been invoked in the case of Steell’s work are the “cult of self-improvement that preoccupied Victorian life” in the midst of the Industrial Revolution but also the rationality demanded from the government after the Reform Act of 1832, which gave greater power to more people than before.²⁹ As for Steell himself, it would not be unreasonable to speculate that as a young sculptor he identified with Alexander in the light of their youthful aspirations and triumphs over difficulty, albeit in completely different arenas.

To find overt politics at work and explicit processes of identification, we turn to modern Greece, where Alexander imagery has been ubiquitous.³⁰ A classicizing monument in the northern town of Sidirokastro (Ottoman-period Demir Hissar), Serres, near the Bulgarian border invokes both general and regional politics, notably the territorial dispute over Macedonia that dominated Balkan politics beginning in the late 19th century and resulted in outright war in 1912–1913 (fig. 31.3). The work of the local sculptor George Zlatanidis, who was born in 1925 in the neighbouring village of Vamvakophyto and worked and died (in 2003) in Serres,³¹ this marble monument stands in the main square, Eleftherias Square, on its own paved and planted island, today surrounded by automobile traffic.³² It consists of two over-life-sized figures, Alexander and the personified Greece, both labelled on the top tier of the tripartite marble base, which

28 John Gifford, Colin McWilliam, and David Walker, *Edinburgh* (Middlesex and New York: Penguin, 1984), 178.

29 Lieuallen, “Sculptor for Scotland”, vol. 1, 6, 112, 117, 120.

30 Alexander had not always been prized as a model in post-antique Greece. The 1821 War of Independence from the Ottomans was a turning point after which the Greeks began to define themselves in light of the classical past and, with it, Alexander; see Peter Mackridge, “Cultural Difference as National Identity in Modern Greece”, in *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. Katerina Zacharia (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 301.

31 See Dora Komine-Dialete, Eugenios D. Mathiopoulos, and Lena Orphanou, eds., *Λεξιλόγος Ελλήνων Καλλιτεχνών: Ζωγράφοι-Γλύπτες-Χαράκτες, 16ος–20ος αιώνας*, Vol. 4 (Athens: Melissa, 2000), 439.

32 On this work, see Syrago Tsiara, *Τοπία Εθνικής Μνήμης: Ιστορίες της Μακεδονίας Γραμμένες σε Μάρμαρο* (Athens: Kleidarithmos, 2004), 184–185 (under the category of heroic-monumental kitsch).



FIGURE 31.3 *George Zlatanis, Alexander and Hellas, marble; Eleftherias Square, Sidirokastro, 1963*

PHOTO ADA COHEN

also serves as the rugged ground on which the two figures stand. The names "Alexandros o Megas" and "Hellas" are repeated twice, in Greek and in Latin characters, on the frontal view of the monument. On one side of the top tier closest to Hellas, the sculptor signed his work in Greek only and dated it in 1963. The middle step of the base bears another inscription in Greek at the front, stating that the municipality of Sidirokastro dedicated this monument to the fallen heroes, 1962. It is as if non-Greeks are expected to identify Alexander and Greece in a general sense but Greek speakers additionally to conjure up a set of circumstances.

Hellas stands on the right, her left leg bent at the knee, stepping barefoot on a slightly elevated portion of the ground, strewn with objects: a helmet, a sword, some leaves, a broken wheel (best viewed from one side and the back). Rendered frontally, she turns her head emphatically in profile, in the direction in which her right arm is extended and her index finger points. With her left hand she holds a scroll partly unfurled against a tablet, possibly alluding to a written version of the command made by her pointing finger. Her wavy hair looks deceptively short from the front, pulled away from her face in a helmet-like bowl shape, but the back view reveals flowing long tresses that reach below her exposed shoulders. Her antique tunic is heavily pleated, subscribing to the classical tradition of "wet" drapery, especially in the area of her breasts. (The three goddesses K, L, M from the Parthenon's east pediment, now in the British Museum, readily come to mind.)

Alexander is shown fully in profile, his body placed in a 90-degree angle to that of Hellas. His left leg, sandaled, is straight but his right bent at the knee in a pose that makes Hellas tower over him. He holds a long spear with his right hand and is additionally equipped with a cuirass and a lion-headed, denticulated helmet that strangely resembles a headband (fig. 31.4). It leaves much of his hair exposed and manages also to incorporate a hint of ram's horns around his ears. The helmet's lion paws reach Alexander's shoulder. The side and back views reveal a shield with a five-pronged star-like pattern at its centre and a sheathed sword hanging from his belt. A certain amount of motif-hunting must have gone into the rendering of the armour. A Medusa of the beautiful type, with flowing hair parted in the middle, decorates the middle of the cuirass recalling her counterpart on the famous *Alexander Mosaic* from Pompeii, a monument that, as we shall see, has been key to the reception of Alexander and is likely to have been mined for additional aspects of the armour (see fig. 31.11). Antithetical griffins embellish the cuirass below the chest, while the belt below the griffins allows the post-antique world to intrude in the form of a small rectangular panel with a frontally posed, icon-like bearded head and bust with a rayed halo: Christ himself or a saint that christianizes Alexander. In addition



FIGURE 31.4 *George Zlatanis, Alexander and Hellas, detail, marble; Eleftherias Square, Sidirokastro, 1963*
PHOTO ADA COHEN

to being a painter and a sculptor, George Zlatanis was an icon painter, and this is the tradition he must have drawn from in this small but significant detail.

Alexander and Hellas have fleshy, generically neoclassical faces with thin lips. Their bodies are sturdy. According to family recollection, Zlatanis used a local youth as model for Alexander, not least in order accurately to render details such as veins, which are especially prominent on the right arm.³³ The poses are very stiff and formal, more so than those of the small plaster model that the artist presented to the town for approval. The bodies there are softer

33 My thanks go to the sculptor's daughter, Sofia Zlatani, also an artist.

and less vertical, their poses more relaxed and movement-oriented. Perhaps the upright choreography of the final version was deemed most suitable to the military theme, but it may also be partly attributed to the size of the rectangular block of Pentelic marble, which encouraged a tight foursquare look, effected by the artist solely by hand tools.³⁴

Alexander's spear and Hellas' extended arm must have been added from separate blocks of stone, as early photographs suggest. Where does Hellas point to and what is she telling Alexander? The answer to the latter question seems easy: she orders him to go fight and does so solely by gesture, as their eyes do not meet. The former question requires some geographical orientation, today easily achieved by the presence of road signs, which point to Bulgaria. Between the Sidirokastro Square and the border with Bulgaria, a regional landmark intervenes: the Rupel Gorge and Fort Rupel, the latter built in 1914 and famously participating in the effort to defend the region in both world wars against Germans and Bulgarians. There is, however, another set of circumstances, the Balkan wars, to which the monument is drawn by way of a sign prominently displayed on the steep granite cliff behind it: "Long Live (ΖΗΤΩ) 27 June 1913", a reference to the day when the Greek army entered Sidirokastro, expelled the Bulgarian army that had replaced the Turks as occupation force for about a year (1912–1913), and formally brought its long period of Ottoman rule to an end.

Indeed, as the Ottomans were withdrawing from Macedonia in 1912, the Bulgarian army attempted to occupy released territories in advance of the Greeks. Many Turkish residents, who had been in the preponderant majority among Sidirokastro's multi-ethnic community,³⁵ left for fear of the new circumstances, and the ethnic mix was rebalanced. The Bulgarian army occupied Sidirokastro from 13 October 1912, until its defeat on 27 June 1913, a period of chaotic struggle among Greeks, Turks, and Bulgarians within the broader context of the second Balkan war. The rivalry between Greeks and Bulgarians was rekindled during the world wars, when the latter fought on the side of the Axis, re-occupying Sidirokastro between 1941 and 1944.

The date 27 June 1913, meaningful only locally, is celebrated every year with speeches, parades, religious ceremonies, wreath-laying, and cultural events such as theatrical and dance performances as part of the festival of the Elef-

34 Photos from various stages of the monument's production and installation were published in the 2013 calendar of the Educational Folk Association of Vamvakophyto, Serres (ΜΟ.Α.Ο.Β.). My thanks to Mr. Nikos Koulialis for his offer of a copy of the calendar as well as additional photos.

35 See Lila Theodoridou-Sotiriou, "Οι Μεταμορφώσεις του Αστικού Χώρου στο Σιδηρόκαστρο", in *Δήμος Σιντικής. Ο Χώρος και η Ιστορία του* (Sidirokastro: Municipality, 2014), 426–428.



FIGURE 31.5 *George Zlatanis, Alexander and Hellas, marble; Eleftherias Square, Sidirokastro, 1963*

PHOTO COURTESY OF EUGENE BORZA

théria.³⁶ The sign was not there when the monument was unveiled but had appeared at least by 1979 in a way that surely shaped the viewer's understanding (fig. 31.5).³⁷ Today multi-storied buildings intervene, dwarfing the monument and diffusing its strong link with the sign, though the link is re-established if one looks for the statue from a distance.

The immediate circumstance that occasioned the commission of the Alexander monument dates to 1960 when the town's heroon, erected in 1920–1922 to commemorate the region's fallen soldiers and other war victims (including those who had died in a massacre on 25 and 26 June, 1913, right before the victory of 27 June), was torn down by the local government to make room for a modern tourist centre. This move proved deeply unpopular.³⁸ Zlatanis' work, enthusiastically supported through local and Panhellenic fundraising, partly appeased citizen discontent. It did not succeed, however, in becoming the town's main monument to the fallen, probably because of a shift in categories: it was a monument to Alexander rather than a memorial to the dead (whose very bones had been interred at the destroyed heroon).

36 On the 2016 celebrations, see the local monthly *Ψίθυροι της Σιντικής* 321 (July 2016): 1, 6–7.

37 My thanks go to Eugene Borza for kindly sharing his photograph of that year.

38 Theodoridou-Sotiriou, "Σιδηρόκαστρο", 444.

Apparently it was the sculptor who proposed the theme. A hero from the deep past with profound capacity to adapt to any military conflict, Alexander must have seemed a suitably safe choice.³⁹ Zlatanīs, however, rendered him in an unconventional iconography by pairing him with the personification of Hellas. The embodiment of Hellas actually goes back to antiquity. She appeared, for instance, on a picture by Panainos in the temple of Zeus at Olympia (Pausanias 5.11.5).⁴⁰ The best extant visual example is on a large Apulian red-figure volute krater (the so-called *Darius Vase*) in the Naples Archaeological Museum, dated ca. 330–20 BCE.⁴¹ Hellas, labelled, appears on the belly of the vase standing in the area above the enthroned king who gives his name to the vase, most likely Darius I in the 5th century BCE rather than Darius III, Alexander's opponent in the 4th century BCE.

Antiquity, however, is not likely to have inspired Zlatanīs in this particular iconographic schema. More accessible sources of inspiration were available, the many heroic female personifications that populated the art of the 19th century in Greece and the rest of Europe. For example, Theodoros Vryzakis' painting of 1858 *Grateful Hellas* shows Greece as a statuesque woman in ancient dress hovering on a cloud, arms outstretched over those who had contributed to the 1821 War of Independence from the Turks.⁴² The painter Eugène Delacroix, a chief representative of Romanticism, had memorably paved the way with his *Liberty* of 1830 in the Louvre, who leads the French people by gesture, and—contextually more relevant—his philhellenic painting of 1826 in the Musée des Beaux-Arts at Bordeaux, *Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi*.

39 Local memory maintains that the mayor responsible for the destruction of the heroon and the commission of a substitute, Alexandros Triantaphyllidis, was drawn to the subject of Alexander because of their shared name. He used the head of Alexander as symbol for his political party. I thank the former mayor, the philologist Apostolos Karydas, and his staff for information provided on July 30, 2014.

40 See Amy C. Smith, *Polis and Personification in Classical Athenian Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 33.

41 Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 81947/H 3253, by the Darius Painter; see Christian Aellen, *À la recherche de l'ordre cosmique. Forme et fonction des personnifications dans la céramique italote* (Zurich: Akanthus, 1994), vol. I: 109–117, vol. II: 213, and most recently Carlos A. Picón and Seán Hemingway, eds., *Pergamon and the Hellenistic Kingdoms of the Ancient World* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2016), 106–107 (cat. no. 6). A fragment painted by the same painter in Copenhagen, National Museum 13320, shows Hellas crowned by two victories. For a recent consideration of personification as a cognitive and discursive code, see Walter S. Melion and Bart Ramakers, eds., *Personification: Embodying Meaning and Emotion* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016).

42 *Η Ελλάς ευγνωμονούσα*, oil on canvas; Athens, National Gallery II 3202.

Zlatanis' visual mode was not romanticism, and his appeal was not overtly on the emotions, yet personifications like Delacroix' were etched in Greek cultural memory generally and most likely in the artist's mind through his study at the School of Fine Arts in Athens. It is not only specific works that inspire artists but also *images*, the former concrete while the latter abstract and transferable from one medium and context to another. As W.J.T. Mitchell reminds us, "the picture is a material object, a thing you can burn or break or tear. An image is what appears in a picture and what survives its destruction—in memory, in narrative, in copies and traces in other media."⁴³ Using a vivid if non-specific image, Zlatanis reworked Greece in a crisp neoclassical form, making the country's spatial dimension (always felt to be under threat, especially in border regions) coherent and fully present.

This is not the typical personified Greece, who crowns a soldier or blesses crowds. Lacking attributes and unconventionally interacting with Alexander, Zlatanis' version of Greece proved a bit unstable. When recalling the monument from a physical distance and thus without the aid of inscriptions, local viewers today disagree as to the identity of the woman, though not of Alexander. Is the woman Greece or is she Nike? Or is she no abstraction at all, but a real woman, Alexander's biological mother Olympias? Interesting cognitive shifts are at work in this string of associations, not only signalling the relative interchangeability of female personifications but also Hellas' conceptualization as a symbolic mother, which in turn leads to Olympias.

Olympias and Alexander had a close relationship, their fortunes in ancient Macedonia rising and falling jointly.⁴⁴ If there is any justification in the female figure's occasional reception as Alexander's mother, her image is surely purged from any negative associations the ancient sources brought to Olympias' persona. Olympias did not send Alexander in any conventional sense to war, but as mother she partook of the Greek cultural tradition of "women arming men". Numerous ancient Greek vases depict the departure of a warrior headed to war, typically flanking him with a woman and an old man, or more directly show a mythological woman (notably Thetis) bringing weapons to her warrior son in the presence of additional figures.⁴⁵ Typically the mood is solemn and melancholic.

43 W.J.T. Mitchell, "Four Fundamental Concepts of Image Science", *IKON* 7 (2014): 28.

44 For a close assessment of the relationship and Olympias' influence, see Elizabeth D. Carney, "Alexander and his 'Terrible Mother'", in *Alexander the Great: A New History*, ed. Waldemar Heckel and Lawrence A. Tritle (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 189–202.

45 See François Lissarrague, "Women Arming Men: Armor and Jewelry", in *Women & War*

From Hellas to mother to Olympias, Zlatanis' woman exudes authority and dignity rather than melancholy. Although her disposition may be deemed protective,⁴⁶ her commanding gesture recalls the other cultural (but not visual) tradition of the implacable Spartan mother, who tells her son either to come back with his shield (a victor) or (dead) on it (Plutarch, *Sayings of Spartan Women* 241F.16). The weapons strewn on the ground suggest that the spectre of death is actually close by, thus introducing an element of synoptic narrative, merging present and future. The broken wheel may be taken literally (analogously to the weapons fallen on the battlefield) or metaphorically (as life interrupted).⁴⁷ Broken objects on the battlefield are prominently visible in the foreground of the *Alexander Mosaic* (see fig. 31.11). In Zlatanis' compact composition they have less to do with the departing Alexander and everything to do with the task at hand, the commemoration of Sidirokastro's dead, a task tinged with emotion even as the pictorial style is solemnly defiant rather than emotional.

As Hellas points her finger toward the unseen enemy, she activates an explicit command for identification with Alexander, not so much the admiring kind we saw at work in Steell's sculpture but rather what Jauss calls *associative* identification, which urges the viewer to act. Associative identification entails "the assumption of a role in the closed imaginary world of a play-action" and suspends "the opposition between presentation and contemplation, between actors and spectators".⁴⁸ By urging towards a future similar to the past and presenting Bulgaria as a 20th-century Persia, the hortatory gesture leaves little room for disinterested contemplation. To some extent the woman's gesture also accommodates Jauss' *sympathetic* mode of identification, in that it presents Alexander as a slightly imperfect hero, in need of guidance by a mother figure. Sympathetic identification breaks down the distance of admiration for a hero even further, makes him approachable, and "can create solidarity leading to action and emulation".⁴⁹

in *Antiquity*, ed. Jacqueline Fabre-Serris and Alison Keith (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 71–81.

46 Tsiara, *Τοπία*, 184.

47 The wheel of fate (passing through ruins) appears in George Seferis' poem of 1955 *Engomi* (20), which explicitly invokes archaeological excavation, while a broken wheel appears in Constantine Cavafy's poem of 1921 *The Favor of Alexander Valas* (1).

48 Jauss, "Levels of Identification", 299.

49 Jauss, "Levels of Identification", 307.

Alexander does not yet act in Zlatanidis' work, but he does in another monument, which merges disparate historical horizons literally in front of the viewer's eyes and asks the viewer for multiple identifications. Nikolaos Dogoulis' *Reserve Officer* at Scholeion Square in Florina does not just rely on a train of mental associations, but sculpts them out (fig. 31.6). It consists of a concrete stele on a marble plinth.⁵⁰ A vertically oriented bronze relief is attached on the stele, showing two warriors in profile striding side by side. Closest to us is an ancient Greek warrior, instantly identifiable (by those familiar with his iconography) as Alexander. Bare-headed, with flowing hair, he wears a cuirass with lion-head appliques⁵¹ and holds a sword, drawn from its scabbard, with one hand and a shield with the other. The rendering of his head and face combines the overall profile look of Alexander in the *Alexander Mosaic* (see fig. 31.11) and the leonine hair arrangement of a three-dimensional work, the so-called *Azara Herm* in the Louvre, the only inscribed Alexander portrait, which is considered a Roman copy (1st or 2nd century CE) of a Lysippan bronze statue.⁵² The iconic head of the Medusa on Alexander's cuirass in the mosaic is missing, though the artist did include it in a preparatory sketch, which makes the influence certain.⁵³

A sliver of the body of a World War II soldier, the main subject, is rendered in the background, in parallel formation to Alexander. He wears a helmet on his head, while his bayonet is shown projecting above Alexander's shield, attached to his rifle. The solidarity between the two figures, both of whom are slightly abstracted, is underscored by the overlapping rendering of their legs and feet, Alexander wearing sandals and greaves and the generic soldier in boots and leggings. The forward thrust of the lower bodies and the overall gestural effect recall the rendering of the Tyrannicides, Harmodius and Aristogeiton, the Athenian heroes of democracy in the late 6th century BCE, as on a red-figure oinochoe fragment in Boston or a Panathenaic amphora in London, both dated

50 My thanks to Marialena Beltsos for photos and information.

51 The iron example with gold lion-headed appliques found in Tomb 11 of the royal tombs at Vergina must be the model. See Manolis Andronikos, *Βεργίνα. Οι Βασιλικοί Τάφοι και οι Άλλες Αρχαιότητες* (Athens: Ekdotiki, 1984), 137–140. This type of cuirass is also worn by Philip II on his modern statue in Thessaloniki executed by George Nikolaidis.

52 Paris, Louvre Ma 436; made of Pentelic marble, it was found at Tivoli; Stewart, *Faces*, figs. 45–46.

53 See Andreas P. Andreou and Ifigenia Vamvakidou, *The Statue Population, The Case of Florina* (Thessaloniki: Ant. Stamoulis Editions, 2006), 317 fig. 52.



FIGURE 31.6 *Nikolaos Dogoulis, Reserve Officer, bronze relief; Scholion Square, Florina, 1998*
PHOTO COURTESY OF BJØRN SMESTAD

ca. 400 BCE.⁵⁴ The absence of space between the figures, however, recalls the tight hoplite arrangements as on the mid-7th-century BCE Protocorinthian *Chigi Vase* in Rome.⁵⁵

The *Officer* serves as Florina's monument to the reserves, and was funded, as an inscription explains, by the association of reserve officers and sponsored by a private benefactor. The artist, a native of Florina who studied in Athens and Rome, executed several other public monuments in the city. Planned as early as 1992, this work was inaugurated on November 7, 1998, the day before Florina's annual celebration of its festival of Elefthéria,⁵⁶ thus associating the end of the Ottoman rule with the events of World War II, which are the immediate subject. The sculptor signed the work on the upper right section of the relief, dating it to 1997.

An inscription on a separate bronze plaque below the relief, is attributed in smaller characters to Strabo and makes the message clear: ΕΛΛΑΣ ΔΕ ΕΣΤΙ ΚΑΙ Η ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑ (Macedonia too is part of Greece) (*Geography* 7, fragments 9).⁵⁷ Given the date of the work, this message refers to the revival of Macedonian rivalries that followed the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s and the foundation of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).⁵⁸ This is not simply a case arguing the continuity of Greek and Macedonian history from antiquity to the present but one that does so by giving Alexander the key role.⁵⁹ Commemoration "sustains or revives the deep traditions of a community that might otherwise be modified over time, as impressions of the past

54 Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 98.936; Beazley Archive Pottery Database no. 1337; London, British Museum B 605; Beazley Archive no. 303122. On the influence of the famous sculptural rendering of ca. 477 by Kritios and Nesiotes, see Andreou and Vamvakidou, *Population*, 26–30.

55 Rome, Villa Giulia 22679.

56 On this monument see Andreou and Vamvakidou, *Population*, 311–328. On the artist, see also Lydakis, *Οι Έλληνες Γλύπτες*, 316–317; Komine-Dialete, Mathiopoulos, and Orphanou, *Λεξικό Ελλήνων Καλλιτεχνών*, Vol. 1 (1997), 378–379.

57 Another public work by Dogoulis in Florina incorporates this type of political message. A bronze bust depicting the hero of the Macedonian Struggle Captain Kotas (1863–1905) gives him voice at the moment of his execution by hanging in the hands of the Ottoman Turks. He states, "I am Greek, you infidels, a grandchild of Alexander the Great." See Andreou and Vamvakidou, *Population*, 340–352.

58 On the conflict see, e.g., Yannis Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 128–133.

59 The studious Alexander also occupied Dogoulis' attention. In 1969 he executed a marble relief titled *Aristotle teaching Alexander the Great*, located in the entrance of the Cultural Centre of Florina. See Gerakina N. Mylona, "Representations of Aristotle in Neo-Hellenic

grow vague and drift into oblivion",⁶⁰ but in this case it also suggests associations that would not otherwise have been drawn.

Both Zlatan's work at Sidirokastro and Dogoulis' in Florina offer interesting approaches to their goal of commemoration by giving pride of place to a hero who does not belong to the immediate task in hand. By contrast, the monument that Zlatan's work sought to replace had the names of those massacred on 25 and 26 June, 1913 at Sidirokastro written on it in gold letters and was thus commemorative in an explicit manner. Commemoration, "a mnemonic technique for localizing collective memory", is a subject famously attended to by the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who brought pioneering attention to the concept of collective memory⁶¹ and, although also criticized, continues to be helpful, especially in his contention that collective memory is situated and filtered through the concerns and conceptions of the present: here Alexander through complicated events of the twentieth century, but also, vice versa, the twentieth century via Alexander. Halbwachs was interested in the relationship between memory and history, which (unlike many scholars today) he understood by way of contrast and difference rather than similarity.⁶² Although the visual arts were not a concern, he usefully underscored that monuments direct and focus memory, in this case by bringing Alexander's territorial ambitions to bear imprecisely on conflicts that were not his. Two historical horizons are thus blended, in one case directly through text and image (Dogoulis) and in the other obliquely by implication (Zlatan). Both present an Alexander who transcends his own time.

The best known among the sculptures examined here is "transcendent" in an even more general sense. This is the famous over-life-sized bronze equestrian statue of Alexander on Thessaloniki's waterfront, not far from the landmark

Art", *Makedonika* 28 (1991–1992): 368, 372–373, pl. 8a. The seated figure of Aristotle is an almost exact copy of Poseidon from the east frieze of the Parthenon.

60 Patrick H. Hutton, "Collective Memory and Collective Mentalities: The Halbwachs-Ariès Connection", *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 15 (1988): 317.

61 See Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992); assessment in Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 120–124, 393–397.

62 Hutton, "Collective Memory", 311–322, quotations from 315. On various theories of collective memory, see Barbara Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Maidenhead and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003). Specifically on memory and the ideology of commemoration in modern Greece, with focus on Florina, see Andreou and Vamvakidou, *Population*, 63–103.

White Tower (fig. 31.7). Its depiction on the city *SightSeeing* buses (along with the Greek flag, the White Tower, the Arch of Galerius, and the tower of Thessaloniki's International Fairgrounds) underscores its iconic status. The work of Evangelos Moustakas,⁶³ who studied in Athens and Florence and was given this commission as a result of a public competition,⁶⁴ this is the largest statue erected in modern Greece, and, together with its dark marble base, reaches over ten meters.⁶⁵ A creation of the early 1970s, the work was cast in Pistoia, Italy, laboriously transported to its location by boat and train, and installed in 1974. Using an ancient form of expression, the artist signed his name in capital letters "Ε. ΜΟΥΣΤΑΚΑΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ", E. Moustakas made this, on one side of the base. Both sides name the subject, Alexander the Great. These are the only texts, so no specific circumstances are invoked. However, the recent addition of a discreet rendering of the "Macedonian Star" next to Alexander's name alludes to the current manifestation of the "Macedonian problem" as a conflict with FYROM, a conflict of symbols.

Overtly heroic in pose, Alexander rides his favourite horse Bucephalas, drawn sword held with his right hand and reins with his left. His wavy hair, parted in the middle, frames his serious face (fig. 31.8). Prominent ram's horns interrupt the naturalistic effect. The brow is contorted, but the mouth is calm. Alexander wears typical Macedonian armour with a short cape flowing in the wind. His back is straight, and he looks steadfastly toward an unseen enemy. The fact that his sword is not oriented in the direction of movement counteracts the impression of immediate attack. The rendering of the massive horse is a tour de force of engineering. Its weight resting on two spots on the hoofs, the group is capable of withstanding significant pressure from the wind, as the artist reports.

63 On the artist and his international career, see Komine-Dialete, Mathiopoulos, and Orphanou, *Λεξικό Ελλήνων Καλλιτεχνών*, Vol. 3 (1999), 166–167.

64 In a letter to the philologist George P. Argyriadis, the politician, novelist, and man of culture George Modis, who had participated in the "Macedonian Struggle" against Bulgarians and Ottomans in the early twentieth century, mentioned his role as president of the committee for the erection of the monuments to Alexander, Philip, and Aristotle, while in another he implied there were some complexities in the process. Modis served in this capacity in the period 1965–1972. See George P. Argyriadis, *Η διηγηματογραφία του Γεωργίου Χρ. Μόδη· Μακεδονικές Ιστορίες* (Thessaloniki: Municipality of Florina, 1988), 19, 150, 153, 165, 195, 199. His resignation, attributed to old age, was possibly forced.

65 Miltiadis Papanikolaou, *Υπαίθρια Γλυπτά Θεσσαλονίκης* (Thessaloniki: Bank of Macedonia and Thrace, 1985), 38, pl. 6 (statue), pl. 7 (accompanying installation; see below); Papanikolaou, *Ιστορία της Τέχνης στην Ελλάδα. Ζωγραφική και Γλυπτική του 20ού Αιώνα* (Athens: Adam,



FIGURE 31.7 *Evangelos Moustakas, Alexander the Great, bronze; Thessaloniki waterfront, 1974*

PHOTO ADA COHEN

We learn inadvertently from Statius in the 1st century CE (*Silvae* 1.1.84–86) that Alexander's favourite sculptor, Lysippus, executed at least one equestrian statue of Alexander, which Julius Caesar installed in his forum in Rome after replacing the head with his own.⁶⁶ Among extant ancient works, a bronze equestrian statuette of the 1st century BCE, discovered in 1861 in Herculaneum and today in Naples, comes closest to Moustakas' vision.⁶⁷ Alexander, dressed

1999), 309–310; Papanikolaou, "Προς την Κατεύθυνση μιας Εθνικιστικής Τέχνης στην Ελλάδα το 1950–1960 και οι Δύο Όψεις της", *Egnatia* 11 (2007): 160–161.

66 Diana Spencer, *The Roman Alexander: Reading a Cultural Myth* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 183–187. Interestingly, it was the Romans that first called Alexander great. The earliest identified reference is in Plautus (*Mostellaria* 775), who refers to Alexander drum Magnum (see Spencer, *Alexander* on the Romans' complex reception of Alexander, esp. 2–5, 52–53, 87).

67 Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 4996; *De' bronzi di Ercolano e contorni incisi con qualche spiegazione*, Vol. 2, Statue (Naples: Regia Stamperia, 1771), 235–241, pls. LXI–LXII; J.J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 43, fig. 36; Paola Stirpe in Stirpe et al., *Images of a Legend: Iconography of Alexander the*



FIGURE 31.8 *Evangelos Moustakas, Alexander the Great, detail, bronze; Thessaloniki waterfront, 1974*
 PHOTO ADA COHEN

in Macedonian military gear but bare-headed and diademed, is caught in the midst of action, ready to stab an unseen enemy with the (now-broken) sword in his right hand. His rearing horse stands on the two back legs, equipped with a neatly shaped animal skin that serves as saddle, and supported by a heavily restored strut in the form of a rudder. (This small work serves to highlight the

Great in Italy (Rome: Gangemi, 2006), 142–145; *Alessandro Magno. Storia e Mito* (Milan: Leonardo Arte, 1995), 234–235 (cat. no. 27); Paolo Moreno, ed., *Lisippo: L'arte e la fortuna* (Milan: Fabbri, 1995), 152–154 (cat. no. 4.18.2); Picón and Hemingway, *Pergamon*, 114–115 (cat. no. 15).

achievement of the Thessaloniki group, which manages to stand against the elements without any artificial support.) Alexander has commanded the horse to halt with the now missing reins held in his left hand.

Together with the statuette of a solitary horse from the same context,⁶⁸ this one is frequently discussed in association with the *Granicus Monument*, a bronze group of Macedonian soldiers executed by Alexander's favourite sculptor, Lysippus, in commemoration of the Macedonian victory at Granicus (334 BCE). Known only from literary sources, this work was installed at Dion and later taken to Rome in the middle of the 2nd century BCE.⁶⁹ According to Arrian (*Anabasis* 1.16.4), the equestrian group depicted the twenty-five Companions who died in the battle. According to Plutarch, it depicted the thirty-four Macedonian dead, including nine footmen (*Alexander* 16.7–8). It may have included Alexander himself (Velleius Paterculus 1.11.3–4)⁷⁰ in a pose perhaps similar to that of the Herculaneum bronze.

By contrast, Moustakas' Alexander does not participate in an overt narrative.⁷¹ Triumphantly poised in eternal victory, the statue embodies Alexander's charisma and holds him in place for the viewer like an icon. Just like the human quality of charisma, charisma as a quality of works of art, "creates the appearance of greatness or grandiosity in the persons or world represented", "a world grander than the one the viewer or reader lives in".⁷² Young, strong, and calm, this Alexander, like Steell's, inspires admiration and primarily admiring identification. But, according to Jauss' scheme, mixed responses, and thus mixed modes of identification with a hero, are possible, and this is one of those occasions. In the absence of inscriptions, Alexander's generalized perfection may, through associative and even sympathetic identification, come to encourage action if a situation comes to demand it (as suggested by the Macedonian star

68 Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 4894; *Alessandro Magno*, 236 (cat. no. 28); Moreno, *Lisippo*, 155 (cat. no. 4.18.3).

69 Pollitt, *Hellenistic Age*, 41–45. A magnificent life-sized horse in the Capitoline Museums, highly naturalistic, with one hoof off the ground, was discovered in Trastevere in Rome in the mid-nineteenth century and may have been part of the monument. See the exhibition catalogue *The Bronze Horse of the Capitoline Museums: A Greek Original in Rome* (Rome: Punctum, 2007).

70 On the text, see Spencer, *Roman Alexander*, 182–183, 184–185.

71 In this sense it brings to mind a headless and fragmentary Hellenistic marble statuette from Pella, whose rider is upright and faces forward. He is nude but wears a chlamys; Pella, Archaeological Museum ΓΛ54; *Alessandro Magno*, 237 (cat. no. 29).

72 C. Stephen Jaeger, "Aura and Charisma: Two Useful Concepts in Critical Theory", *New German Critique* 38 (114) (2011): 18.

suddenly appearing on the base). This equestrian Alexander, that is, seems contingently capable of making an intervention into contemporary Balkan politics, which is why he became the undisguised model for the colossal statue defiantly erected in 2011 in Skopje's *Macedonia Square*, whose sword is more aggressively directed.⁷³

Despite elements of stylization and mild abstraction, all monuments discussed so far subscribe to a neoclassical style, which, in its accessibility, was until the late 20th century the dominant trend in public monuments anywhere. In Greece neoclassicism had two roots: direct appropriation of classical antiquity and classicism through the mediation of European art, which had approached antiquity on its own terms. Although a Greek modernism, emulating European trends, also emerged, modernism was not easily tolerated in situations that addressed issues of ethnic and cultural identity.⁷⁴

This was made plainly clear in 1993 when a statue of Alexander for the city of Florina was rejected by the authorities because it did not resemble the familiar image of the hero. The municipality commissioned the well-known native artist Dimitris Kalamaras in 1957, but he did not complete his statue until 1992–1993 after a long period of engagement and experimentation with measurements and forms through numerous studies in various media. Kalamaras studied equestrian monuments in Italy, and the subject of man and horse became very important to him. He thought and rethought it, rearranging his shapes. The final gilded and enamelled bronze ended up being clearly figural but abstract and geometric, static and calm rather than dashing, presenting an intellectual hero rather than a warrior, lacking in pathos and pothos.⁷⁵ The “anti-heroic” work attracted the wrath of, among others, the then-bishop of Florina Augustinos Kantiotis, a reactionary activist, who deplored the generality of the depiction and its refusal to serve the national interests explicitly. A sizeable part of the local public also opposed the statue's installation and succeeded in

73 On the use of Alexander by two nations, see Stathis Gourgouris, *Dream Nation: Enlightenment, Colonization, and the Institution of Modern Greece* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 150.

74 On the two sides of Greek art in the twentieth century, addressed by most scholars of modern Greek art, see the summary in Papanikolaou, “Κατεύθυνση”.

75 Hadjinikolaou, *Μέγας Αλέξανδρος*, 142–149 (entry by Eugenios Mathiopoulos); Tsiara, *Τοπία*, 177–182; Andreou and Vamvakidou, *Population*, 234 n. 13; cf. 227–238 on the “Dying Soldier”; 140–167 on the statue of Captain Kotas; 99, 144–145 for a biographical sketch of the artist and reference to his study in Athens, Florence, and Rome. On Kalamaras, see also Komine-Dialete, Mathiopoulos, and Orphanou, *Λεξικό Ελλήνων Καλλιτεχνών*, Vol. 2 (1997), 74–76; Papanikolaou, *Ιστορία της Τέχνης*, 208–209.

keeping it out of view. Art historians, by contrast, and enlightened members of the public, saw a path-breaking, non-imperialist, non-“academic” Alexander they could truly be proud of and embrace for the history of Greek art. Interestingly, both reactions hinged on opposed but positive visions of Alexander himself.

Arguably the most unabashedly nationalistic use of Alexander’s image, among other warriors from the deep past, occurred in the period of military dictatorship that Greece endured between April 21, 1967 and July 24, 1974. A horizontally oriented rectangular poster from that era offered a timeline of military highlights, from classical antiquity to the 1960s, meant to demonstrate historical and cultural continuity.⁷⁶ Titled “the military virtue of the Greeks”, the poster features a perspectival road, diagonally traversing its surface, with Leonidas at one end and at the other the silhouette of a modern soldier set against the emblem of the dictatorship, a phoenix with prominent wings. Alexander’s head appears in profile between Leonidas and references to Constantine, especially his vision of the cross before the battle of the Milvian bridge. Half of the rays of the cross shine in the direction of Alexander’s face, while Christ’s exhortation to Constantine, *EN TOYΤΩ ΝΙΚΑ*, is within Alexander’s immediate field of vision. Wearing his leonine helmet, Alexander is accompanied by a text drawn from Plutarch (*De Alexandri magni fortuna aut virtute* 1.8 = *Moralia* 330E) but with a small grammatical alteration: “ΝΥΝ ΔΕ ΤΗΣ ΓΗΣ ΑΝΗΛΙΟΝ ΜΕΡΟΣ ΕΜΕΙΝΕΝ ΟΣΟΝ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ (instead of ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΝ) ΟΥΚ ΕΙΔΕΝ.” Thus, the statement “now, any part of the world that did not see Alexander remained without sunlight” became “now, any part of the world that Alexander did not see remained without sunlight” and Alexander, intentionally or not, assumed a more active role in bringing light to the world.

Consistent with the spirit of the poster, the dictatorial regime celebrated annual “Festivals of the Military Virtue of the Greeks”, complete with parade floats carrying costumed characters drawn from history as well as the late 1960s. Such re-enactments made possible the resurrection of Alexander. He could, for example, ride on his horse into Athens’ *Kallimarmaron* stadium, which was a choice setting for public spectacles,⁷⁷ seeking to excite the viewers’ patriotic spirit. A man riding a horse, whether in the flesh, stone, or bronze,

76 Mendis Bostantzoglou (Bost) et al., *Κάτι το ‘ωπαίον’ Kitch—Made in Greece* (Athens: Friends of “ΑΝΤΙ” Magazine, 1989), 94–95, fig. 245; Gonda Van Steen, “Parading War and Victory under the Greek Military Dictatorship: The Hist(ori)onics of 1967–74”, in *War as Spectacle: Ancient and Modern Perspectives on the Display of Armed Conflict*, ed. Anastasia Bakogianni and Valerie M. Hope (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 288, fig. 15.3.

77 Van Steen, “Parading War”, 273–277, 281–282.



FIGURE 31.9 *Evangelos Moustakas, The Battle of Issus, detail, bronze relief; Thessaloniki waterfront, 1974*
 PHOTO ADA COHEN

is a shorthand for power, which is why this became the traditional mode for representing rulers and other military notables, from Alexander to Marcus Aurelius—who rides his horse in the middle of the Campidoglio in Rome—to the condottieri of Italian Renaissance cities.⁷⁸

Equestrian statues are typically iconic, often omitting explicit references to the contexts where their triumphs unfolded. Evangelos Moustakas, however, had an entire square to shape around his icon-like Alexander in Thessaloniki and so incorporated a strong dose of narrative by way of a bronze relief that serves as a partial background to the statue (figs. 31.9, 31.10). The frieze's military theme was further elaborated by a series of eight long spears (*sarissae*) (in groups of five and three) pointing upwards and accompanied by eight

78 A representative sample with subtle differences in pose is illustrated in Cavalli-Björkman, “Adriaen de Vries’s Horses”. On the equestrian type in Greece and its challenges, see Stelios Lydakis, *Η Νεοελληνική Γλυπτική. Ιστορία—Τυπολογία* (Athens: Melissa, 2011), 298–299 (with approving reference to Moustakas’ Alexander monument) and *Οι Έλληνες Γλύπτες* (Athens: Melissa, 1981), 184–185 (398–399 on Moustakas’ Alexander); general comments in Tsiara, *Τοπία*, 128; Andreou and Vamvakidou, *Population*, 34–35.



FIGURE 31.10 *Evangelos Moustakas, The Battle of Issus, detail, bronze relief; Thessaloniki waterfront, 1974*
PHOTO ADA COHEN

shields, each with a different apotropaic emblem (snake, bull's head, feline, bird, Medusa). The battle frieze, 21.15 by 30.20 m in size and rendered in sharp linear style, presents a generic narrative, though the artist's declared intent was for this to be a fundamentally historical monument, a precise depiction of the battle of Issus (333 BCE), a key victory for Alexander.⁷⁹

First comes a small group of helmeted Macedonian horsemen in parallel formation, then a phalanx of sarissa-bearing footsoldiers, similarly helmeted. Alexander rides next, bare-headed but with ram's horns, pointing his spear towards the Persian king Darius, who turns away from the direction of the chariot he drives to look at his opponent straight in the eye. Persian soldiers, primarily on foot but a few on horseback, precede the chariot but, instead of following in its direction away from danger, they move toward it. Other Persians fill in any available space in the background. They are easily identifiable by their soft, chin-wrapping caps, a few equipped with bow and arrow. The Persians express their defeat with their downcast eyes, while a mature man (a seer

79 I am grateful to Evangelos Moustakas for the information he provided in July 2009.



FIGURE 31.11 Alexander Mosaic, Roman mosaic from the House of the Faun at Pompeii, ca. 100 BCE
NAPLES, MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO NAZIONALE 10020; PHOTO
ALINARI/ART RESOURCE, NY

who could foretell the future, according to Moustakas) walks in a daze of grief at the edge of the composition. In Moustakas' interpretation, Alexander does not intend to kill Darius but only to capture him, and his magnanimity is meant to come through. The depiction of death and dying is meant to be subdued, though both sides suffer casualties, fallen soldiers under the hoofs of the horses.

The artist cites Greek vase painting and Persian art as his sources of inspiration, and this is indeed evident, but the influence of Assyrian relief sculpture and of the *Alexander Mosaic* (fig. 31.11) seems equally, if not more, evident. It is quite surprising that this mosaic, the most famous depiction of Alexander, takes us to Italy rather than Greece, to the site of Pompeii, where it was installed at about 100 BCE in the House of the Faun. About 5.82 by 3.13 meters with its border, the mosaic is made of tiny stone tesserae and portrays a battle between the Macedonian-Greek army on the left side and the Persian army on the right.⁸⁰ Most scholars, though not all, consider it a reasonably accurate copy of a Greek painting of the late 4th century BCE. The illusionism of the picture,

80 See Ada Cohen, *The Alexander Mosaic: Stories of Victory and Defeat* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) with bibliography; additional bibliography in Ada Cohen, *Art in the Era of Alexander the Great: Paradigms of Manhood and Their Cultural Traditions* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 324 n. 4.

which is brought about by a highly accomplished play of light and shadow, cast shadows, mirroring effects, and foreshortened forms, is quite extraordinary and partly accounts for its fame.

As in Moustakas' relief, easy to distinguish are the two kings: Alexander, here looking troubled despite his successful attack, and Darius, whose great distress is highlighted. There is panic and death on the Persian side, contrasted with the victorious march of the Greeks.

In Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, the philosopher Socrates converses with the sculptor Cleiton about art and asks: shouldn't "the threatening look in the eyes of fighters be accurately represented, and the triumphant expression on the face of conquerors be imitated?" (3.10.8, trans. E.C. Marchant). His interlocutor answers that indeed they should. The *Alexander Mosaic* complicates matters by qualifying this look of success. Although the main interest lies in establishing Alexander's victory, there is also a strong layer of sympathy for the enemy's plight, which Moustakas seems to have taken to heart.

Artists participating in (and winning) competitions for public monuments are not autonomous. Whatever political ideals they need to satisfy, however, materializing the work entails multiple decisions that plunge the artist into the history of art in ways large or small: a hair arrangement, a Medusa ornament, a gesture or expression. This is especially the case with a figure as famous and as frequently depicted through time as Alexander. Monuments to Alexander intervene in both history and art. Over a century ago, Alois Riegl defined the traditional "intentional monument" as "a human creation, erected for the special purpose of keeping human deeds or events (or a combination thereof) alive in the minds of future generations", a definition that suits well the works I have discussed, especially those in Greece.⁸¹

The last work to be considered was not made as a monument in this sense, and it professes much greater authorial autonomy (fig. 31.12). Being contemporary, it has not yet acquired the "age value" that would make it an "unintentional" monument in Riegl's sense. But it is a monument in the sense articulated by Erwin Panofsky, who, a few decades after Riegl, broadened the concept to include all human artefacts that retain interest in the present: for the art historian, essentially all works of art.⁸² Panofsky also drew a key contrast between monuments and documents, concepts central to the work of the German conceptual artist Simon Wachsmuth, who, in the tradition of contemporary art,

81 Alois Riegl, "The Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin", *Oppositions* 25 (1982): 21 (trans. Kurt W. Forster and Diane Ghirardo).

82 Erwin Panofsky, "The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline", in his *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955), 8–11.



FIGURE 31.12 *Simon Wachsmuth, Battle of Alexander, detail from Installation Where we were then, where we are now, 2007*

PHOTO NILS KLINGER, BY COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

engages both with the history of art and with art historians directly. Like art historians such as Riegl, Panofsky, and Aby Warburg, Wachsmuth is concerned with questions about the preservation and transmission of the past in the present. His work titled *Where We Were Then, Where We Are Now* offers a fascinating case in the reception of Alexander and demonstrates the inexhaustibility of the human imagination even when working within the constraints of a clear model.

This multi-media installation was first presented in Kassel during the 2007 exhibition Documenta 12 and includes a recreation of the *Alexander Mosaic*, 2.60 by 5.60 m in size.⁸³ Like the Roman-period *Alexander Mosaic*, which restages a Greek work in a different medium, this minimalist image tells us that history continues to exist by being made contemporary. Using about 20,000 black round magnets on a four-partite white board (instead of millions of stone

83 See the exhibition catalogue *Documenta Kassel 16/06–23/09 2007*, ed. Roger M. Buergel and Ruth Noack (Cologne: Tachen, 2007), 324–325, 384. A version of the installation is now in the collection of the Belvedere Museum in Vienna. I am grateful to Simon Wachsmuth for information and photographs.

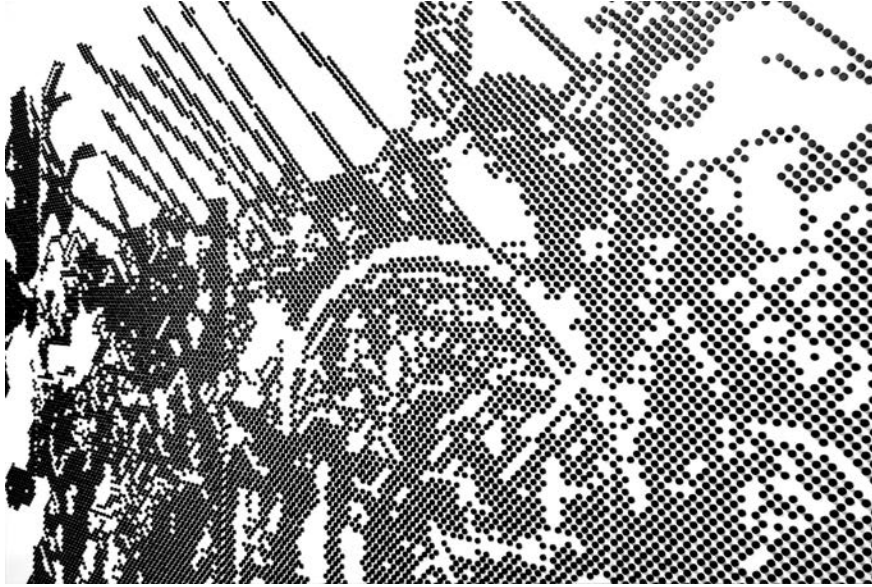


FIGURE 31.13 *Simon Wachsmuth, Battle of Alexander, detail from Installation Where we were then, where we are now, 2007*

PHOTO NILS KLINGER, BY COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

tesserae in mortar), Wachsmuth rejected colour completely and created an abstract version of history, which dissolves from close by and coalesces from a distance into something fascinatingly familiar. Alexander, having lost his individuality, merges into the group that surrounds him, while Darius dominates the pictorial field (fig. 31.13), even more than in the *Alexander Mosaic*. The Persian king was treated variously but often negatively in the Greco-Roman sources (though not in the *Alexander Mosaic*), and Wachsmuth's bold moves are analogous to the recent sympathetic reconsiderations of Darius' career and leadership by historians of antiquity whose analyses incorporate Achaemenid sources.⁸⁴ As in some of his other works, Wachsmuth is especially interested in areas of damage, and those are highlighted in his treatment here.

Wachsmuth's *Battle of Alexander* is only one part of the work, which further unfolds through a group of twelve rods variously patterned in black and white,

84 See especially Pierre Briant, *Darius in the Shadow of Alexander*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Pierre Briant, "The Empire of Darius III in Perspective", in *Alexander the Great: A New History*, ed. Waldemar Heckel and Lawrence A. Tritle (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 141–170.

as well as vitrines with black-and white arrangements of undated newspaper clippings, photos, and photocopies, notably regarding modern and ancient Iran, among other features.⁸⁵ Also included are two films. One is on the Zurkhaneh, a stylized group of exercises, here undertaken by contemporary Iranian men. The other is on Persepolis, the ancient Persian capital, and offers a detailed visual exploration of the Apadana, with its relief decoration and tall columns, as well as glimpses of the contemporary tourist experience.

In 330 BCE Alexander captured Persepolis and burned its palaces, an unfortunate event whose motivations (whim or policy, with variations thereof) are still debated.⁸⁶ Without depicting it directly, Wachsmuth wants the viewer to remember this act of gratuitous violence. His entire assemblage questions the nature of historiography,⁸⁷ the styles and narratives of historical representation, conflicting truth claims, and the relationship of history to fiction. Furthermore, the artist critiques the accuracy of the Eurocentric view of Persian history as presented in the classroom. His commentary is open-ended. As far as the *Battle of Alexander* is concerned, it is interesting that theoretically the magnets could be rearranged and the story altered. While offering us aesthetic pleasure, Wachsmuth refuses to admire Alexander. He encourages “ironic identification” in Jauss’ sense, characterized as “a level of aesthetic reception upon which an identification that the reader would otherwise have expected is denied in order to jolt him out of his undisturbed attentiveness to the aesthetic object and to direct his awakened reflection toward the conditions of illusion and the possibilities of interpretation.”⁸⁸

Steell’s and Moustakas’ statues communicate instantaneously through their heroic idealizations. Zlatanis’ group asks us to stop and figure who is who and

85 Heinz Moser, “Ästhetik und Bildung im Zeitalter von Multimedia”, in *Media Art Culture: Media Culture with Reference to Documenta 12*, ed. Judith Seipold (Kassel: Kassel University Press, 2008), 290–291, fig. 8.

86 Eugene N. Borza, “Fire from Heaven: Alexander at Persepolis”, *Classical Philology* 67 (1972): 233–245; Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg, “Alexander and Persepolis”, in *Alexander the Great: Reality and Myth*, ed. Jesper Carlsen et al. (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1993), 177–188; Ali Mousavi, *Persepolis: Discovery and Afterlife of a World Wonder* (Boston and Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 4–5, 63–69. It is unfortunate that not many traces of Darius have been uncovered at Persepolis. See Briant, *Empire of Darius*, 164.

87 This is why an essay on the history of historiography uses Wachsmuth’s *Alexanderschlacht* as illustration for its questions on the nature of history: Dagmar Freist, “Geschichte der Geschichtsschreibung”, in *Geschichte. Studium—Wissenschaft—Beruf*, ed. Gunilla Budde, Dagmar Freist, and Hilke Günther-Arndt (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008), 178–196, fig. 11.

88 Jauss, “Levels of Identification”, 313.

what they are advocating, while Moustakas' battle relief and Wachsmuth's constellation of disjunctive martial references force us to linger—in one case in order to “read” sequentially, in the other to make notional connections over and among fragments and gaps. In 1935 Bertold Brecht's “worker who reads” relativized Alexander's successes by asking, “The young Alexander conquered India. He alone?” The works discussed here answer this type of question variously. In so doing they maintain jointly and individually that the past lives in the present and that Alexander continues to inhabit the present whether as hero or hero in need of deconstruction. The visual codes that make this evident have been diligently extracted from the archives of the history of art.

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Alexander the Great Screaming Out for Hellenicity: Greek Songs and Political Dissent

Guendalina D.M. Taietti

In my study on the reception of Alexander the Great in Hellenic musical productions of the twentieth and twenty-first century, I have gathered ca. eighty Alexander-songs,¹ which are characterized by a variety of linguistic registers and are composed in different languages: Ancient and Modern Greek, Greek dialects, and English. The Alexander-songs represent several genres, such as metal, rock, folk, rap, anthems, music for orchestra, and film scores (soundtracks) for Alexander-movies,² and they cover various themes, including the personal experiences, desires, love affairs, and struggles of the Modern Greek man. They link everyday life and politics to the wide-spread myths and

- 1 For the collection of the “Alexander songs”, I did research on the online database of Greek songs *stixoi.info* and other music websites such as *Discogs* or *Youtube*. I also thank my Greek friends for the useful details on Modern Greek music they gave me.
- 2 Two are the soundtracks composed by Greeks for Alexander-films: Christodoulos Chalaris’ music for Theodoros Angelopoulos’ *Megalexandros*, shot in 1980, and Vangelis (Evangelos Odysseas Papathanasiou)’s film score *Alexander*, released in 2004 for Oliver Stone’s film, widely accredited for having the Oxford Professor Robin Lane Fox as historic advisor. For *Megalexandros*, see Giorgos Ziakas, *O Μεγαλέξανδρος σε κοντινό πλάνο / Alexandre le Grand vu de pres* (Athens: Editions Themelio, 1995); Dan Georgakas, “A Reconsideration of Theodoros Angelopoulos’s *O Megalexandros*”, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 18, no. 1 (2000): 171–182; Linda Myrsiades, “Heroic Identity in the Dilessi Affair, Aris Velouhiotis, and Alexander: A Reading of Angelopoulos’s *Megalexandros*”, *College Literature* 38, no. 4 (2011): 44–56. For Stone’s *Alexander*, see Angelos Chaniotis, “Making Alexander fit for the twenty-first century Oliver Stone’s *Alexander*”, in *Hellas on Screen. Cinematic Receptions of Ancient History, Literature and Myth*, *Habes* 45, ed. Irene Berti and Marta García Morcillo (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008), 185–201; Ivana Petrovic, “Plutarch’s and Stone’s *Alexander*”, in *Hellas on Screen. Cinematic Receptions of Ancient History, Literature and Myth*, *Habes* 45, ed. Irene Berti and Marta García Morcillo (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008), 163–183; Paul Cartledge and Fiona Rose Greenland, “Introduction”, in *Responses to Oliver Stone’s Alexander*, ed. Paul Cartledge and Fiona Rose Greenland (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 3–12; Joanna Paul, “Oliver Stone’s *Alexander* and the Cinematic Epic Tradition”, in *Responses to Oliver Stone’s Alexander*, ed. Paul Cartledge and Fiona Rose Greenland (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 15–35.

reinterpretations of the great conqueror that have flourished over the centuries since his lifetime and, according to the motifs deployed, we can categorize the Alexander-songs as historical, mythological, satirical, or political. However, these boundaries are fluid: some songs can be in fact allocated to more than one group, since historical and satirical songs are sometimes bearers of jingoistic motifs and political songs may be ironic in their style.

The historical content encompasses Alexander's deeds and ancient Greek history and culture, with a special focus on the Kingdom of Macedon and the city of Thessaloniki. Historical songs make wide use of tropes developed in the Classical and Hellenistic age, such as the polarity between the culturally superior Greeks and the uneducated, violent barbarians,³ and Alexander's invincibility on the battlefield and fondness for knowledge. The lyrics insist on the Greekness and on the sacredness of Macedonia, which is often described as *holy land* (ιερή γη). Alexander is always referred to as *Greek* or *Greek-Macedonian*:⁴ he represents Greece's military and cultural hero, as he has the noble merit of having spread the Hellenic language and heritage to the entire *oikoumene* through his conquests. Amongst Alexander's superhuman characteristics and unmatched deeds praised in the songs, we can enumerate his divine descent (he was believed to be the offspring of Heracles), his glorious passage through Egypt, and the famous solving of the Gordian knot. These episodes, together with references to the most famous battles during the Persian campaign (Granicus, Issus, Gaugamela) are recalled in the lyrics in order to lend the songs a veneer of solid historical knowledge. Also members of Alexander's family and entourage—Olympias, Philip, Aristotle, Hephaestion, Roxane, Bucephalus—and technical terms of the Macedonian army (*phalanx*, *sarissa*) are introduced to make the songs more effective and credible.

Most of these melodies are music written with orchestral accompaniment, a genre characterized by the seriousness which is required by the narration of "historical national" facts.⁵ Two songs are rap tunes, a genre which normally

3 See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1987), 56–57; Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition Through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 99–100; Jonathan M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 45–48; Jonathan M. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 179.

4 When presented as a "Greek Macedonian", Alexander is usually described with periphrastic expressions: for example, see the song Ὕμνος του Αλεξάνδρου (*Hymn to Alexander*) in the play *Ode for Alexander the Great* (2004) performed by Petros Gaitanos, l. 1: Αλέξανδρος ο' Ἕλληνας της γης των Μακεδόνων (*Alexander the Greek from the Macedonians' land*).

5 The ancient history of the Macedonian Kingdom is considered an integral part of Greece's

does not enjoy great popularity with the wider public and targets mainly a younger audience. In these two rap Alexander-songs the accuracy of the lyrics is “certified” by the sizable quantity of historical and literary references to the life of the Macedonian.⁶

The mythological content represents elements which became popular through oral tradition and are taken from ancient and modern mythology and folklore, such as Olympias’ interest in witchcraft, the legend of the mermaid sinking the ships of the sailors informing her of Alexander’s death, the eternal hope for a return of the great conqueror as a saviour of the Hellenic nation, and the interpretation of the Macedonian as a new St George slaying a dragon, which symbolizes the oppression endured by the Greeks during the Ottoman Empire.

The majority of the mythological songs are labelled as *folk music*;⁷ they owe part of their popularity to the well-known themes and to the famous Greek musicians and singers who composed or interpreted them, such as Manos Chatzidakis, George Dalaras, Nana Mouschouri, and Chrysanthos.⁸

The satirical content is constructed on a sharp and ironical contrast between the wretched life of the Modern Greek man and the mightiness of Alexander.

national history, as contemporary Greeks claim to have a cultural and historical continuity since antiquity. In ancient times, several authors, amongst them Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women*, fr. 3, Hellanicus, *FGrH* 4 F 74, and Herodotus, VIII 137–139, testify the Hellenic origins of the Macedonians; as Miltiades B. Hatzopoulos, “Macedonians and the Other Greeks”, in *Brill’s Companion to Ancient Macedon. Studies in the Archaeology and History of Macedon, 650 BC–300 AD*, ed. Robin Lane Fox (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2011), 73, has pointed out, in antiquity the dichotomy between Greeks and Macedonians is political and not racial. In modern times, the adjective “Macedonian” describes a regional or an ethnic identity, rather than a national one, and although Macedonia has its own symbols and heroes, such as the Star of Vergina and the fighters of the Macedonian Struggle, Greek-Macedonians do not constitute a national community in contrast to a Greek one: cf. Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 83.

6 For instance, the rapper Artemis added well-known episodes excerpted from both the Greek and the Eastern Alexander-lore to his careful outline of the Macedonian’s military deeds. His song *Αλ-ισκάνταρ* (*Al-Iskandar*) attracted much attention from the Greek public and it was rearranged by Stamatis Spanoudakis, one of the most famous Greek composers.

7 With the term “folk, popular music” I intend modern Greek *λαϊκή μουσική* (*laïke mousiké*) and not *δημώδης μουσική* (demotic music), which appeared in the Byzantine period and developed during the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century in demotic language.

8 George Dalaras, *Αν ήμουν ο Μεγαλέξανδρος* (*Were I Alexander the Great*); Nanà Mouschouri, *Δεν ήταν νησί* (*It Was Not an Island*), composed by Manos Chatzidakis; Chrysanthos, *Το τραγούδι της τάβλας* (*The Song of the Board*), included in the soundtrack of Angelopoulos’ *Megalexandros*.

Satirical songs deal mainly with love affairs and the Macedonian hero is briefly mentioned as a model to imitate and admire; their lyrics are accompanied by rock and folk melodies.

Political songs are characterized by overtly political topics, describing and discussing the national policies and international relations of the Hellenic state. They express the Greeks' social distress and dissent from the directives of the European Union and of the US; Alexander represents a cliché swiftly mentioned to strengthen the musician's views rather than a national leader being appreciated for his concrete political and military skills. Anthems, together with the energetic sounds of metal, rock, and rap music, are the chosen genres to deliver political messages.

Among the miscellaneous Alexander-music production here outlined, I have focused on a cluster of lyrics which aim at supporting Greece's position in the thorny dispute over the right to use the name *Macedonia*, a right demanded both by Greeks and Slavo-Macedonians.⁹ The hero becomes a pretext to discuss the Macedonian Question and a *sine qua non* for the Greek assertion of Macedonia's Greekness.¹⁰ In this paper I shall offer a sample of three songs with the translation and comment on the motifs, feelings, beliefs, values, and literary tropes deployed by the composers. Attention will be paid to the interpretations of the lyrics by the performing singers and their reception by the listening audience, but also to the links between the date of composition or release and international developments in the Macedonian Question.

9 Note on the names used in this paper to define the inhabitants of FYROM and their country: my preference for "Slavo-Macedonians", "FYROM" or "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" instead of "Macedonians" and "Macedonia" is not dictated by a personal political choice but by need for clarity. The stress on Slavic origins is required to distinguish the Republic's people from the ethnic group of the Greeks living in Northern Greece (also known as Aegean Macedonia); furthermore, since the Interim Agreement of 1995, FYROM has been the official nomenclature. For a history of the Macedonian dispute, see Elisabeth Barker, *Macedonia. Its Place in Balkan Powers Politics* (London–New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs. Oxford University Press, 1950).

10 For the Greek scholarly and state interpretation of the Macedonian Question, see Spyridon Sfetas and Kyriakos Kentrotis, "Skopje: In Search of an Identity and International Recognition. A Critique of the Recent Publication by the Skopje Academy of Sciences and Arts: *Macedonia and Its Relations with Greece* (Skopje, 1993)", *Balkan Studies* 35, no. 2 (1984): 337–377; Nikolaos Zachariadis, "Nationalism and Small-State Foreign Policy: The Greek Response to the Macedonian Issue", *Political Science Quarterly* 109 (1994): 647–667.

Μακεδονία Ξακουστή (*Famous Macedonia*)

Famous Macedonia is a well-known song in Greece, often played as a military march in parades and national anniversaries. The military version is a rearrangement of a traditional melody associated with the Μακεδονικός Χορός (*Macedonian Dance*),¹¹ also known as the *Hasapikos*, “the Butcher’s dance”, which dates back to the Byzantine Empire. There are two folk traditions about the origins of the tune and the dance: the first relates them to the Ακρίτες (*Akrites*), the military units placed at the edges (τάκτρα) of the empire to guard the frontiers from the Arab raids;¹² the second links them with the traditional dance of the Greek Butchers’ guild in Constantinople, from the Turkish word for butcher, *hassip*.¹³

The lyrics of *Famous Macedonia* entail a different story from that implied by the melody. In their original version, the song is built on three key points: it bolsters anti-Bulgarian feelings (l. 3); it expresses joy at the regaining of freedom after a period of enslavement (l. 4, ll. 8–10, l. 12); it champions the idea that Macedonia, and thus Alexander, are Greek (l. 2, ll. 5–6). The lyrics probably date back to the convulsive period of the Balkan wars (1912–1913), or even earlier to the years of the Macedonian Struggle. In fact, in Greek folklore the lyrics are associated with the Μακεδονομάχοι (*Makedonomachoi*), the fighters who took the leading role in the fight for Macedonia’s freedom against the Ottoman Empire and the Bulgarians in 1904–1908.

After the Balkan wars and Macedonia’s declaration of independence from the Turkish yoke in 1912, the song continued to be taught in Greek schools, especially in the North, as the Bulgarians remained a threat inside the borders of Greek Macedonia until World War II.¹⁴ During the German occupation

11 See *Makedonia Xakousti* on the Hellenic Army official website: http://armyold.army.gr/files/File/pdf/makedonia_ksakousti_new.pdf (accessed 24-01-2018)

12 Christos Makrypoulias, “Ακρίτες”, *Εγκυκλοπαίδεια Μείζονος Ελληνισμού*, Μ. Ασία 2007, <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=3478> (accessed 10-03-2016). Linos Politis, *Ιστορία της Νεοελληνικής Λογοτεχνίας* (Athens: ΜΙΕΤ, 2004¹⁴), 26.

13 Dick Oakes, International Folkdances Resources website: http://www.socalfolkdance.org/dances/G/Grigora_Hasapiko_A_Greek.pdf (accessed 24-01-2018). Cf. also Walter Zed Feldman, *Klezmer: Music, History, and Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 352.

14 Victor Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria and the Macedonian Question* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 81 fn. 26: “The much more accurate and older version of the song refers to the Bulgarians and not to the Barbarians. Indeed, this song was part of the post-World-War II nation-building, anti-communist campaign of the Greek government, and identifies Greece’s adversaries as the ‘Bulgarians’ not as ‘Barbarians’. [...] The nameless ‘barbarians’ replaced the Bulgarians of

of Macedonia (the so-called Κατοχή, 1941–1944), Germans aimed at including Greece in their sphere of influence in the Balkans; in order to keep the local population quiet, they assigned the administration of the eastern part of Greek Macedonia to the Bulgarians.¹⁵ This coalition can help us to understand the variants of the lyrics which still circulate in Greece: the Bulgarians were perceived as *tyrants*, since they helped the Germans in the oppression of Greek Macedonians, and they were also considered *barbarians*, for they have Slavic culture and do not belong to the Greek Patriarchate.

Given that, at least until the first half of the twentieth century, Greeks identified all the neighbouring Slavic-speaking populations who threatened Greece's heritage and territoriality with the name *Bulgarians*, the song was widely broadcast in the 1990s during demonstrations mounted to promote Macedonia's Greekness against the newly formed Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and it became very popular even among Greek communities living abroad. For this reason, *Famous Macedonia* has often been unofficially regarded as the Greek Macedonians' "national" anthem.¹⁶ Currently, the song is still taught in schools in Northern Greece to foster national values, such as love for the motherland and respect of history.

Μακεδονία ξακουστή
του Αλεξάνδρου η χώρα,
που έδωξες τους Βούλγαρους
κι ελεύθερη είσαι τώρα!

- 5 ήσουν και θα 'σαι ελληνική,
Ελλήνων το καμάρι,
κι εμείς θα σε αντικρίζουμε
ελεύθερη και πάλι!

- 10 Οι Μακεδόνες δεν μπορούν
να ζούνε σκλαβωμένοι,
όλα κι αν τους τα πάρουνε
η λευτεριά τους μένει!

the region after the government of Constantinos Karamanlis developed its own détente policy toward Bulgaria in the 1970s".

- 15 Eugene N. Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus. The Emergence of Macedon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 10.
16 On this point, see Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 83; *contra*, Roudometof, *Collective Memory*, 81 fn. 26.

- Το διαμαντένιο στέμμα σου
για βάλε στο κεφάλι,
15 για να φανεί η δόξα σου
Μακεδονία πάλι!

- Μακεδονόπουλα μικρά
τώρα και εσείς χαρείτε,
προτού και εσείς στα βάσανα,
20 όλου του κόσμου μπίτε.

Later variants:

- I. 3: βάρβαρους / τύραννο / τυράννους.
II. 7–8: κι εμείς τα Ελληνόπουλα
σου πλέκουμε στεφάνι.
I. 11: όλα κι αν τα χάσουνε.
II. 15–16: κι εμείς θα σ' αντικρίζουμε
περήφανα και πάλι.
II. 19–20: γιατί στην ομορφότερη
πατρίδα τώρα ζείτε.

Translation.

*Famous Macedonia
the country of Alexander,
you drove the Bulgarians away
and you are now free!*

- 5 *You were and will be Greek,
the Greeks' pride,
we will look at you
free again!*

- Macedonians can not
10 live enslaved,
although they are deprived of everything
their freedom remains!*

*Your diamond crown
put on the head,*

- 15 *so that your glory will shine*
 (free) Macedonia again!

Little Macedonian children
 rejoice now,
 before you too the misery
 20 *of the whole world will enter.*

Translation of the variants:

- l. 3: the barbarians / tyrant / tyrants
 ll. 7–8: we, Greek offspring,
 we will knit a crown for you.
 l. 11: although they loose everything.
 ll. 15–16: and we will look at you
 proudly again.
 ll. 19–20: because in the most beautiful
 fatherland you are living.

The later variants give a milder expression of the anti-Slavic feelings (l. 3) and celebrate Greece's victories and pride without brooding too much on the past struggles (last strophe).

Ω Αλέξανδρε (*Oh Alexander*)

In 2009, a group of young rappers released a song entitled *Oh Alexander*, defined as *patriotic rap*. The predilection for ancient Greek history is made clear by the name that the, then, newly formed band gave to itself, *Amphistomos Phalanx*, a term used by ancient authors for the double-edged phalanx, a Macedonian military formation in which the best captains were stationed in the front and the rear.¹⁷

The song is divided into two parts: in the first, the lyrics are sung in Modern Greek and sound quite compelling thanks to the fast rhythm of the rap performance, and to the use of the perfect rhyme or of the assonance at the end of each verse; in the second, a profound male voice describes Alexander's

17 Ael., *Tact.* 37; cf. Plb. II 28.6; II 29.4 and Ascl.*Tact.* III 5; x 22. For Aelianus Tacticus' fortune over the centuries, see Alphonse Dain, *Histoire du Texte d'Élien le Tacticien. Des Origines à la Fin du Moyen Age* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1946).

personal qualities and leadership in Ancient Greek. The audience is asked neither to recognize the quotation from Arrian's *Anabasis* nor to understand all the words; the solemnity of the ancient language and the serious tone of the reading voice are means to invite the audience to take seriously on board the motifs dealt with in the song.

Lyrics. Part 1: Modern Greek.

(Strophe A)

- 5 [...] Με καρδιά λιονταριού και βλέμμα αετού
ο επερχόμενος ηγέτης από γένους χρυσού
[...] Σε μυστήρια μύηθηκε και ο νους του αφυπνίσθη
10 ολόλευκο το φως της γνώσης μέσα του εισήχθη
και ανέβασε τον πήχη πιο ψηλά
από το ανάστημα ενός γήινου βασιλιά
γιατί δέχθηκε παιδεία, Ελληνική αγωγή.
16 [...] Ξεκίνησε ταξίδι τα εγκόσμια να κατακτήσει
ώστε να μπορέσει να αγγίξει
η ψυχή του μετά θάνατον τα Ηλύσια πεδία
εκεί όπου ο κάθε ήρωας γίνεται ένα με τα θεία.

(Chorus)

- 20 Ω Αλέξανδρε, του Φιλίππου γιε,
Νίκη θεϊκή που σε γέννησε.
Ω Αλέξανδρε, στόλισες με φως,
την Υφήλιο, δεν ηττήθηκες ποτέ!
Ω Αλέξανδρε, όλοι οι βάρβαροι
25 μπρος τα πόδια σου υποκλίνονται.
Ω Αλέξανδρε, στρατηλάτη συ
Ένδοξε, τρανέ των Ελλήνων Βασιλεύ!

(Strophe B)

- 40 [...] και οι μάχες αρχίζουν, η μια μετά την άλλη
ήττα δεν γνωρίζουν μα του ανίκητου τη χάρη.
Ακατόρθωτες οι πράξεις και τα εδάφη που 'χαν πάρει,
μα ποτέ στην ιστορία κάποιος άλλος το 'χε κάνει
μόνο ο μέγας των Ελλήνων, απόγονος Αρίων
45 πολεμιστών κατακτητών στρατηγικής ειδήμων.
Τον τότε κόσμο έσωσε από το σκότος έβγαλε
πολιτισμό και γνώση με το πέρασμά του έδωσε.

Translation.

(Strophe A)

- 5 [...] *With a lion's heart and an eagle's gaze,
the upcoming leader of a golden stock*
 [...] *He was initiated to the mysteries and his mind was awakened;*
 10 *the bright white light of knowledge penetrated him,
and he raised the bar higher
than the stature of an earthly king,
because he was educated with a Greek upbringing.*
 16 [...] *He began a journey to conquer the world
so that after his death his soul
would be able to reach the Elysian Fields,
where every hero becomes one with the divine.*

(Chorus)

- 20 *Oh Alexander, son of Philip,
Divine victory gave you birth.
Oh Alexander, with light you adorned
the world; you were never defeated!*
Oh Alexander, all barbarians
 25 *bow at your feet.*
*Oh Alexander, oh commander
Oh glorious, mighty king of the Greeks!*

(Strophe B)

- 40 [...] *And the battles begin, one after the other
they do not encounter defeat, but the merit is of the "invincible one"*
 [...] *[Alexander].*
*Unachievable deeds and conquests;
no one else in the entire history had ever done it [before]*
only the greatest of all the Greeks, a descendant of the Aryans
 45 *warriors and conquerors, an expert of military strategy.*
*He saved the world of that time bringing it out of the darkness;
at his passage he gave culture and knowledge.*

Lyrics. Part 2: Ancient Greek.

[Arr. An. VII 28.] (1) *Alexander died in the hundred and fourteenth Olympiad in the archonship of Hegesias at Athens. According to Aristobu-*

lus,¹⁸ he lived thirty-two years and eight months; his reign lasted twelve years and the same eight months. He excelled in physical beauty, in zest for exertions, in shrewdness of judgement, in courage, in love of honour and danger, and in care for religion [τό τε σῶμα κάλλιστος καὶ φιλοπονώτατος καὶ ὀξύτατος γενόμενος καὶ τὴν γνώμην ἀνδρείοτατος καὶ φιλοτιμώτατος καὶ φιλοκινδυνώτατος καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιμελέστατος]. (2) *Over the bodily pleasures he exercised the greatest of self-control: as for those of the mind, it was praise alone for which he was absolutely insatiable* [ἡδονῶν δὲ τῶν μὲν τοῦ σώματος ἐγκρατέστατος, τῶν δὲ τῆς γνώμης ἐπαίνου μόνου ἀπληστότατος]. He had the most wonderful power to discern the right course, when it was still unclear, and was most successful in inferring from observed facts what was likely to follow. His skills in marshalling, arming and equipping a force [καὶ τάξαι στρατιὰν καὶ ὀπλίσαι τε καὶ κοσμήσαι δαημονέστατος], in raising the morale of his troops, filling them with confidence and banishing their fear in dangers by his own fearlessness was altogether most admirable. (3) In fact, when what was to be done was clear, he displayed the utmost daring, and whenever he had to snatch a success from the enemy by anticipation, before anyone could even apprehend what was to happen, he had a most wonderful ability to strike first. No one was more reliable in keeping pacts or agreements, or more secure from being trapped by the fraudulent. As for money, he was very sparing in using it for his own pleasures [χρημάτων τε ἐς μὲν ἡδονὰς τὰς αὐτοῦ φειδωλότατος], but most liberal in employing it for the benefit of the others.

English translation by PETER A. BRUNT, *Arrian. Anabasis of Alexander*, Loeb vol. 11, London: Harvard University Press, 1996²

The song opens with a list of the admirable qualities which account for Alexander's greatness: lion-heartedness and insight (l. 5), a golden lineage (l. 6), superior knowledge (ll. 9–10), and heroic deeds (ll. 16–19)—all characteristics which were already highlighted in the ancient sources.¹⁹ The band's narrative approach reminds us particularly of Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*: in Chapter 2, the conqueror's divine genealogy is outlined as a truism, since *without any doubts* (τῶν πάντων πεπιστευμένων ἔστί) Alexander's lineage goes back to the Heraclid Caranus through his father Philip 11 and to Achilles' son Neoptolemus from

18 Aristobulus, *FGrH* / *BNJ* 139 F 47.

19 For Alexander's divine descent, cf. D. S. XVII 1.5; Plu. *Alex.* 2.1; Arr. *An.* I 11.8. For his heroic nature and deeds, *inter alia* cf. D. S. XVII 85; 97.3; Str. XVII 1.43; Arr. *An.* IV 28.1–2; V 26.5; Curt. VIII 11; Justin XII 7.13. For Alexander's fondness for knowledge, see Plu. *Alex.* 8.2–4.

his mother Olympias' side.²⁰ Plutarch lingers on the importance of the divine and occult in the king's life: he narrates Alexander's parents' first meeting in Samothrace and their initiation into the sacred mysteries,²¹ Olympias' zealous practice of Orphic and orgiastic rites,²² and the portents, namely a thunderbolt and a seal with the lion figure that preannounced Alexander's conception.²³ Plutarch seems to suggest that Alexander was a "product of his time":²⁴ influenced by his parents' beliefs and religious orientations, he was thought to have a superhuman, heroic nature. In the first oration of *De Alexandri Magni Fortuna aut Virtute*²⁵ Plutarch even presents Alexander rivalling and comparing himself with Heracles, Perseus, and Dionysus.²⁶

20 Plu. *Alex.* 2.1.

21 Plu. *Alex.* 2.1. For a discussion on the mysteries in Samothrace, see: Hdt. 11 51.2. Walter Burkert, "Concordia Discors: The Literary and Archeological Evidence on the Sanctuary of Samothrace", in *Greek Sanctuaries. New Approaches*, ed. Nanno Marinatos and Robin Hägg (London: Routledge, 1993), 178–191; *Idem*, "Greek Margins: Mysteries in Samothrace", in *Λατρείες στην περιφέρεια του Αρχαίου Ελληνικού Κόσμου*, ed. Aphrodite Avagianou (Athens: E.I.E., 2002), 31–63; Jan N. Bremmer, *Initiation into the Mysteries of the ancient World* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 21–54.

22 Plu. *Alex.* 2.4–6.

23 Plu. *Alex.* 2.2–3. See James R. Hamilton, *Plutarch, Alexander. A commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 3–4.

24 Cf. Ernst Fredricksmeier, "Alexander's Religion and Divinity", in *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great*, ed. Joseph Roisman (Leiden—Boston: Brill, 2003), 253–256.

25 Plu. *Mor.* 323a [= *De Alex.* 1 10]: Ἡρακλέα μιμούμαι καὶ Περσέα ζηλώ, καὶ τὰ Διονύσου μετῶν ἔχνη, θεοῦ γενάρχου καὶ προπάτορος (*I [Alexander] imitate Heracles and I emulate Perseus, and I follow in Dionysus' footsteps, divine ancestor and forefather*). On Dionysus' role in the Macedonian Pantheon, see Paul Goukowsky, *Essai sur Les Origines du Mythe d'Alexandre: 336–270 av. J.-C.* Vol. 11: *Alexandre et Dionysos* (Nancy: Université de Nancy 11, 1981), 8–11.

26 For the scholarly debate on Alexander's religious beliefs and emulation of his ancestor heroes, see William W. Tarn, "Alexander's Deification", *Alexander the Great*, 11, appendix 22 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 347–374; Lowell Edmunds, "The Religiosity of Alexander", *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 12 (1971): 363–391; A. Brian Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire. The Reign of Alexander the Great*, (Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 1993), 278–290; Fredricksmeier, *Alexander's Religion*, 253–278; Ian Worthington, "Alexander and Deification", in *Alexander the Great. A Reader*, ed. Ian Worthington (London: Routledge, 2003), 236–241; cf. also Boris Dreyer, "Heroes, Cults, and Divinity", in *Alexander the Great. A New History*, ed. Waldemar Heckel and Lawrence A. Tritle (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 218–234; Matías Leiva Rodríguez, "La Divinidad de Alejandro Magno: un mito académico", *Revista de Estudios de Historia de la Cultura, Mentalidades, Económica y Social* 4 (2015): 10–16.

The lion's heart and the eagle's eye are metaphors for Alexander's bravado and shrewdness as a military leader, but it is worth noting that the lion and the eagle are animals strictly related to Macedonian royal power, since the Argeads considered themselves to be the descendants of Zeus via Heracles. In fact, Heracles' association with the lion is due to the first labour ordered by king Eurystheus, who wanted the hero to bring him the skin of the Nemean lion.²⁷ Zeus chose the eagle as his personal companion and messenger, and in one version of the myth the god sent the regal bird to abduct the young Ganymedes for him and to carry him to heaven.²⁸ Moreover, both of Alexander's heroic ancestors, Achilles and Heracles, were titled *lion-hearted*,²⁹ and the images of the enthroned Zeus holding an eagle in his hand and of Heracles wearing a lion scalp were the iconography chosen by the Macedonian conqueror for his first silver mints.³⁰

On closer examination of the lyrics, though, Amphistomos Phalanx seems to endorse the idea not that Alexander's mightiness was due to his divinity but mainly to the education that he received, since he was introduced to sacred mysteries and he enjoyed a Hellenic upbringing, considered superior to any other (ll. 9–13). In the ancient sources, the Macedonian's fondness for Greek culture and literature was described by his steersman Onesicritus, who claimed that the hero used to sleep with a copy of the *Iliad* under his pillow.³¹ Furthermore, the linkage between secret notions and human superiority suggested by the band is already attested in Plutarch's *Life* 7.3: at Mieza Alexander "seemed to receive from Aristotle not only ethical and political doctrines, but also to participate in those secret and more profound teachings which philosophers

27 Ps.-Apoll. *Bibliotheca* II 74–76.

28 Ps.-Apoll. *Bibliotheca* III 141.

29 θυμολέων: cf. Hom. *Il.* v 639; *Od.* xi 267 (Heracles); Hesiod *Theog.* 1007 (Achilles).

30 Martin J. Price, *The Coinage in the Name of Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus. A British Museum Catalogue* (Zurich–London: Swiss Numismatic Society—British Museum Press, 1991), 30–31; Georges Le Rider, *Alexander the Great. Coinage, Finances, and Policy* [Engl. Transl. William E. Higgins, with a preface by Glen W. Bowersock], (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2007), 2–3: on some silver fractions issued in Macedonia, the reverse has just an eagle, instead of the bird together with the enthroned Zeus.

31 Onesicritus, *FGrH* / *BNJ* 134 F 38 (= Plu. *Alex.* 8.2): ἡ δὲ καὶ φύσει φιλόλογος καὶ φιλαναγνώστης (sc. ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος) καὶ τὴν μὲν Ἰλιάδα τῆς πολεμικῆς ἀρετῆς ἐφόδιον καὶ νομίζων καὶ ὀνομάζων, ἔλαβε μὲν Ἀριστοτέλους διορθώσαντος ἣν ἐκ τοῦ νάρθηκος καλοῦσιν, εἶχε δὲ αἰεὶ μετὰ τοῦ ἐγγχειριδίου κειμένην ὑπὸ τὸ προσκεφάλαιον, ὥς Ὀνησίκριτος ἰστόρηκε· τῶν δὲ ἄλλων βιβλίων οὐκ εὐπορῶν ἐν τοῖς ἄνω τόποις Ἀρπαλον ἐκέλευσε πέμψαι.

designate by the special terms ‘acroamatic’ and ‘epoptic’.³² In Chapter 7.4 Plutarch states that, when already in Asia, Alexander wrote a letter to his teacher, reproaching him for having published a part of these hidden teachings; the conqueror was feared for a superiority over other men that was based on a higher knowledge not accessible to everyone.³³

The first strophe concludes with a further reiteration of the Macedonian’s superhuman status, as the Persian campaign is a way to gain a place in the Elysian Fields, where heroes and the blessed rest in their afterlife (ll. 16–19).³⁴

The chorus repeats the *topoi* of the Macedonian’s invincibility and of his cultural superiority already deployed in the first strophe. The image of the barbarians bowing at his feet refers to *proskynesis*, the act of prostration that was common among the Persians when meeting a person of a higher rank.³⁵ As Arrian states, Alexander, prompted by the sophist Anaxarchus,³⁶ demanded that his Macedonian and Greek soldiers bowed before him and kissed him during a drinking-bout in the same way as his Persian subjects—a demand which was poorly received by his army. In fact, in Greece people prostrated themselves only before the gods and Alexander’s soldiers surely considered this request outrageous.³⁷

The chorus also uses two clichés which today’s Greeks reiterate and are proud of: the certainty that Greece was the cradle of civilisation and the idea that Alexander spread the light of this superior knowledge to the entire *oikoumene*.³⁸ The boastful assertion of Hellenic cultural supremacy is derived from the polarity between Greeks and Barbarians which was exploited by Athens in the aftermath of the Persian wars and became a trope in ancient

32 Plu. *Alex.* 7.3. ἔοικε δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος οὐ μόνον τὸν ἠθικὸν καὶ πολιτικὸν παραλαβεῖν λόγον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἀπορρήτων καὶ βαθυτέρων διδασκαλιῶν, ἃς οἱ ἄνδρες ἰδίως ἀκροαματικὰς καὶ ἐποπτικὰς προσαγορεύοντες οὐκ ἐξέφερον εἰς πολλοὺς, μετασχεῖν.

33 Plu. *Alex.* 7.4: Ἀλέξανδρος Ἀριστοτέλει εὖ πράττειν. οὐκ ὀρθῶς ἐποίησας ἐκδοὺς τοὺς ἀκροαματικούς τῶν λόγων τίνι γὰρ δὴ διοίσομεν ἡμεῖς τῶν ἄλλων, εἰ καθ’ οὓς ἐπαιδευθήμεν λόγους, οὗτοι πάντων ἔσονται κοινοί;

34 Hom. *Od.* IV 561–565. Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, “Elysium”, in *BNP* 4 (2004): 933–934 with further bibliography.

35 Hdt. I 134.

36 Arr. *An.* IV 10.6–11.1. Curtius Rufus (VIII 5.5–6.1) has the poet Cleon of Sicily making the speech in favour of *proskynesis*.

37 Plu. *Alex.* 54.2–6; Cf. Curt. VIII 5.5–6.1; Justin XII 7.1–3. Folkert T. Van Straten, “Did the Greeks Kneel Before Their Gods?”, *Babesch* 49 (1974): 159–189.

38 In Greece major champions of these ideas were the historians Constantine Paparrhegopoulos and Christos Zolokostas. Cf. Plu. *Mor.* 328ce.

literary productions of successive centuries.³⁹ It is worth noting that in antiquity, until the fifth century BC, the term *barbaros* meant that a person was either non-Hellene or culturally inferior;⁴⁰ it was not a racial judgement and this is proved by several positive descriptions of “the others” that Herodotus left us in his *Histories*. Alexander himself exploited this antithesis before and in the first stages of his Persian campaign: he claimed that he was going to take vengeance for Xerxes’ destruction of the Acropolis during the Persian wars and, once in Asia, he played the role of the champion of Hellenic freedom against the barbarian.⁴¹ The tension caused by the sharp binary distinction between Greeks and non-Greeks was then tempered during the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman rule, when the Hellenes called themselves *Rhomioi*, feeling themselves to be members of a wider Christian Orthodox community which comprised different nationalities.⁴² It then re-emerged at the end of the nineteenth century in the lead up to the Balkan wars with the political and racial overtones that it still bears today. The cultural supremacy and the purity of the Hellenic genealogy springing without interruption from the ancient Hellenic *genus* became the kernel of the plan of Hellenization of the Syllagos (*Organisation for the diffusion of Greek letters*) under Charilaos Trikoupis’ government

39 For early occurrences of the dichotomy between Greeks and Barbarians, see Christopher Tuplin, “Greek Racism? Observations on the Character and Limits of Greek Ethnic Prejudice”, in *Ancient Greeks. West and East*, ed. Gocha R. Tsetskhladze (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 54–57: the term *Barbaros* already occurred in the Archaic period and was not created by the events of 480 BC; however, the Persian attacks on mainland Greece made it a more regular word.

40 Christopher Tuplin, *Greek racism?*, 47–53; Thomas Harrison (ed.), *Greeks and Barbarians* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 7; 127–128: there is little stress on biological differences between Greeks and Barbarians; Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, “Greek Perceptions of Ethnicity of the Macedonians”, in *Identità e prassi storica nel Mediterraneo Greco*, ed. Luisa Moscati Castelnovo (Milano: Edizione Et, 2002), 174; Joseph Skinner, *The Invention of Greek Ethnography From Homer to Herodotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 44: “Greek identities were, from the outset, hybrid, relational, and inventive, meaning different things at different times to different people”.

41 See Alexander’s first letter of answer to Darius: Arr. *An.* II 14.4–9.

42 Robert Browning, “Greeks and the Others: From Antiquity to the Renaissance”, in *Greeks and Barbarians*, ed. Thomas Harrison (New York: Routledge, 2002), 257–277; Gill Page, *Being Byzantine: Greek Identity Before the Ottomans, 1200–1420* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 27–71; Cf. İpek Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 11: *Rhoumeli* indicates the Ottoman territories on the western side of the Bosphorus, “European Turkey”.

(1893–1895). The Syllogos strove for the education of the Bulgarophone peasants in Northern Greece (Macedonia) so that they would join the Greek fight for freedom in the Balkan wars:⁴³ at that time, “winning the population’s *ethos*” meant adding territory, land possessions, and broadening the boundaries of the Hellenic state. The stress on the glorious past of Greece and on the supremacy that the Greek language enjoyed as a *lingua franca* among the wealthy mercantile bourgeoisie in the Balkans became the cornerstone of the government’s agenda for the Greek *ethnogenesis*: since the Hellenic nation is the only heir of the higher ancient culture, Greekness means superiority and prestige. It follows that every Greek must fight to preserve Hellenic freedom. A second decisive step in the Hellenization plan of Macedonia was conducted by Metaxas during his dictatorship in 1936–1939: villages bearing a Slavic name were renamed with a Greek toponym and the Slavic speaking population was forced to abandon its language and traditions and to learn Greek; those who did not conform to Metaxas’ Hellenization plan either fled to other Balkan countries or were tortured and deported.⁴⁴

In the rap song, the trope of Greek/barbarian polarity is manipulated in order to endorse and sponsor today’s Greeks’ racial superiority, of which cultural supremacy is the “obvious result”. Alexander is explicitly called the descendant of the Aryans (l. 44) and, since he is described as the great Hellenic ancestor, Modern Greeks are prompted to believe in their own superiority too. Furthermore, the date of release of the song is particularly important: the band’s fans welcomed it as a way to reinforce the veto Greece put on the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia’s NATO membership in 2008 and to express disagreement with the EU acceptance of the Republic’s candidacy as a member. The song was praised as “patriotic” and also perceived by right-wing listeners as a hymn against FYROM.

43 Cf. Thomas W. Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1768 to 1913. The Long Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 181 (Trikoupis’ improvement of the education system). As Gallant has noticed (p. 294), “many people, regardless of whether they were Slavophones or Grecophones, still held on tenaciously to pre-national identities, seeing themselves as simply ‘Christians’ (Christianoi, Rom or Romioi) or espousing a more localised identity”. For the process of rediscovery of the Classical past as a means to reaffirm Greek National identity, see Peter Mackridge, “Cultural Difference as National Identity in Modern Greece”, in *Hellenisms. Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. Katerina Zacharia (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 302–304.

44 Anastasia Karakasidou, “Politicizing Culture: Negating Ethnic Identity in Greek Macedonia”, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 11 (1993): 1–28.

In the second strophe, the band makes use of well-known elements of the ancient Macedonian army, such as the *sarissa* and the Macedonian *phalanx*,⁴⁵ and it also mentions a “shining golden star”, which reminds us of the “Sun (or Star) of Vergina”, a symbol to which both Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia lay claim.⁴⁶

Alexander’s invincibility, superiority in battles and unmatched generalship are repeatedly eulogized throughout the strophe. The *topos* dates back to the Alexander-historians: according to Diodorus, Alexander was granted the title of Ἀνίκητος / Ἀήττητος (*invincible*) by the oracle of Ammon,⁴⁷ whereas Plutarch states that he was called invincible by the Pythia.⁴⁸ Having planned to consult the oracle before departing for the Persian campaign, the Macedonian arrived during the so-called ἀποφράδες ἡμέραι, days on which no business was done; thus the priestess did not want to deliver the oracle. Alexander then tried to drag her to the temple; at this point, overwhelmed by his ardour, she uttered that he was invincible: ἀνίκητος εἶ, ὦ παῖ. This recognition has almost become a motto in the Modern Greek lore, making of Alexander a holy saviour who will come to fight for the well-being and the freedom of the Hellenic nation.⁴⁹

45 On Alexander’s army, see Nick Secunda and John Warry, *Alexander the Great. his Armies and Campaigns 334–323 BC* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 1999²), 7–52.

46 The Sun of Vergina became known after the excavations of the site of Aegae directed by Prof M. Andronikos in 1977–1978. On the archaeological excavations and the discussion about the Royal tombs’ chronology, see Manolis Andronikos, *Vergina, the Royal Tombs and the Ancient City* (Athens: Ekdotike Athenon, 1984); Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus*, 253–266; Ioulia Vokotopoulou, *Οδηγός Αρχαιολογικού Μουσείου Θεσσαλονίκης* (Athens: Ekdoseis Kapon, 1996), 149–188; Robin Lane Fox, “Introduction: Dating the Royal Tomb at Vergina”, in *Brill’s Companion to Ancient Macedon. Studies in the Archaeology and History of Macedon 650 BC–300 AD*, ed. Robin Lane Fox (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2011), 1–34. In the Royal tomb II, attributed to Philip II, a golden *larnax* containing human remains was found, on the top of which there is carved the so-called “Sun” or “Star of Vergina”. This sixteen-ray wheel appears in Macedonian art since the sixth century BC and it probably symbolizes the sun; during Philip II’s reign it started being associated exclusively with the Royal court (see Ioulia Vokotopoulou, *Οδηγός*, 151–153). On the rivalries over the use of the ancient Macedonian symbols, see Loring M. Danforth, “Ancient Macedonia, Alexander the Great and the Sun or Star of Vergina: National Symbols and the Conflict Between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia”, in *A Companion to Ancient Macedonia*, ed. Joseph Roisman and Ian Worthington (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 582–589.

47 D. S. XVII 51.3.

48 Plu. *Alex.* 14.4. See Tarn, *Alexander*, 342–343; Goukowsky, *Essai*, 60–61.

49 See, for example, the shadow theatre play Karaghiozis, *Alexander the Great and the Cursed Snake/Dragon*.

The second part of the song is an excerpt from the last book of the *Anabasis of Alexander*. Arrian's Alexander is the perfect ruler: he is gifted with all the good personal qualities required of a king, such as cleverness, curiosity, piety, honesty, generosity and self-restraint, and he has all the skills needed by a great commander in the battlefield, such as ardour, self-confidence and military genius. This portrayal of Alexander reflects and enhances Amphistomos Phalanx's own description of the Macedonian hero. Even if the listener is not able to recognize the author or the historical work from which the quotation is excerpted, s/he will be able to appreciate the *gravitas* added to the lyrics by the sound of the Ancient Greek text and to understand most of it. In fact, no actual knowledge of the Classical language is required to understand the excerpt: the reiteration of the -τάτος ending—the superlative grade of the adjective still in use in Modern Greek—immediately informs the audience that the ancient quotation is a praise of Alexander's mightiness; furthermore, most of the adjectives are common even in today's spoken language.

The choice of the passage itself is quite indicative of the affection that Amphistomos Phalanx harbours for the Macedonian hero: at chapter VII 29, after the long encomiastic list of virtues, there follows a wholehearted apology for the mistakes Alexander committed during the Persian campaign.⁵⁰ Arrian then feels compelled to plead with the reader to consider the totality of the Macedonian's achievements, which surely are a proof of his uniqueness amongst the rest of humanity (VII 30.2).⁵¹ The band chose to quote only the first part of the historian's peroration as a closure of the song, avoiding the list of errors for which Alexander could be attacked. This is a clear statement: Alexander will always be remembered for his outstanding qualities, a matter of pride for the Greeks, but not for the Slavs.

Η Σχοπιανή (*The Girl from Skopje*)

The Girl from Skopje is a satirical song sung by Pantelis Theocharidis and composed by Christos Nikolopoulos (music) and Manos Rasoulis (lyrics). It was

50 For the peroration, see A. Brian Bosworth, *From Arrian to Alexander: Studies in Historical Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 135–156. Francesco Sisti and Andrea Zambrini, *Arriano. Anabasi di Alessandro*, vol. II (Libri IV–VII), (Roma: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla. Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2004), 658–665.

51 Arr. *An.* VII 30.2: οὐδὲ ἔμοι ἔξω τοῦ θείου φῦναι ἂν δοκεῖ ἀνὴρ οὐδενὶ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων ἑοικώς.

included in the album entitled *Με τον Ομπάμα αντάμα* (*Together with Obama*), released in 2009. This title, which sounds comic to Greek-speakers, informs the audience that the main topic of the album is a humorous discussion of contemporary national and international political matters affecting Greece. Surely the authors' thematic choices were inspired by Obama's election as President of the US and by Greece's veto of the EU candidacy of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The *Girl from Skopje* well suits the general humorous intent of the album, as it satirizes the difficult relations between the Hellenic State and the Republic of Macedonia through the description of an impossible love-story. A Greek man envisages bringing to his country a beautiful lady from Skopje, the object of a desire which has driven him mad (ll. 11–14), but the simple thought of appearing together with her in the two main Greek cities, Thessaloniki in the North and Athens in the South, scares him, as people will be horrified to face the uncommon, almost illegitimate couple (ll. 19–22). There is no solution to the sentimental-political dilemma; only God could help him (ll. 15–18). The man is well aware that this love will cause horror (l. 20), solitude (l. 22: quarantine), utter failure and pain (l. 18: symbolized by the steep cliff). The impossibility of the relationship reflects the unlikelihood of an agreement between Greece and FYROM over the right of the name Macedonia.

- Κούνια μπέλα, κούνια μπέλα
ο Αλέξανδρος γεννήθηκε στην Πέλλα,
ως εκ τούτου κι υπ' αυτή τη λογική
η Μακεδονία, ήταν, είναι και θα είν' Ελληνική.
5 Δε θα ξαναανακαλύψουμε την Αμερική
κι όσον αφορά τα Σκόπια
ας παν να γίνουν σκόρπια!

[...]

- 11 Μα έλα που μια Σκοπιανή
μια ομορφιά, μια καλλονή
μου έχει πάρει τα μυαλά
και τα 'χω χάσει για καλά.
15 Ο Θεός να βοηθήσει
να μου τα τακτοποιήσει
γιατί καρντάσια λέω ως πως
θα με υποδεχτεί γκρεμός.

- Να την πάω Σαλλονίκη
 20 θα μας πιάνει η φρίκη,
 να τη φέρω στη Αθήνα
 προβλέπω καραντίνα,
 ως εκ τούτου κι υπ' αυτή τη λογική
 η Μακεδονία, ήταν, είναι και θα είν' Ελληνική.

[...]

Translation.

- My pretty cradle, pretty cradle
 Alexander was born in Pella,
 thus, as it follows logically,
 Macedonia was, is and shall be Greek.*
 5 *We will not rediscover America
 and, regarding Skopje,
 let it be swept away!*

[...]

- 11 *But a girl from Skopje
 a real beauty, a beautiful woman
 has stolen my mind
 and I have lost it for good.*
- 15 *May God help
 to sort this out,
 because, my friends, I tell you that
 a steep cliff will welcome me.*

- Shall I go with her to Salonika?
 20 Horror will fall upon us.
 Shall I bring her to Athens?
 I predict quarantine.
 Thus, as it follows logically,
 Macedonia was, is and shall be Greek.*

The song is a medley of musical genres; it starts as a lullaby, but it suddenly turns into a *folk song*; it wants to make an impression on the audience and to

mirror the listener's feelings about the Macedonian Question. In fact, the lyrics display the Greek people's refusal to recognize the political existence of a state under the name "Macedonia" on their north-eastern border: ll. 6–7 even contain a (politically incorrect) wish for the State of Skopje—the name used by Greeks to refer to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—to be swept away, to disappear from the politico-geographical maps and from the Earth. The idea of FYROM's disintegration and *damnatio memoriae* is endorsed by simple logic, which takes for granted that Alexander is a *Greek* Macedonian: at ll. 2–4, the syllogism starts by stating that the Greek hero is born in Pella; since Pella is in Macedonia, it is self-evident that Macedonia is (and will always be) Greek. The final part of the reasoning is the actual motto which was created by the Hellenic state for the massive campaign conducted in 1992–1995 to safeguard the name "Macedonia", as designating the Northern territories incorporated into the Greek borders during the Balkan wars. The slogan, in its full version *Macedonia was, is, and will be Greek*, was meant to embody the state propaganda, which claimed that the region has always been Greek, with a cultural and historical continuity that dates back to antiquity without interruption.⁵² Undoubtedly, the slogan was a real success: it was widely used by the Greeks during the anti-Slavo-Macedonian demonstrations in Thessaloniki, but also in other Greek cities on the mainland and in Greek communities abroad.

52 For a discussion on the Ancient Macedonians' ethnic identity, see Winthrop Lindsay Adams, "Sport and Ethnicity in Ancient Macedonia", in *Macedonian Legacies, Studies in Ancient Macedonian History and Culture in Honor of Eugene Borza*, ed. Timothy Howe and Jeanne Reames (Claremont: Regina Books, 2008), 57–72; Johannes Engels, "Macedonians and the Greeks", in *A Companion to Ancient Macedonia*, ed. Joseph Roisman and Ian Worthington (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 81–98; Miltiades B. Hatzopoulos, "Macedonia and the Macedonians", in *Brill's Companion to Ancient Macedon*, ed. Robin Lane Fox (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2011), 43–49; *idem*, "Macedonian and the Other Greeks", in *Brill's Companion to Ancient Macedon*, ed. Robin Lane Fox (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2011), 51–78; Arthur Muller, "The Other Greece: The Archaeology of Macedonia", in *Ancient Macedonia: Language, History, Culture*, ed. Georgios K. Giannakis (Thessaloniki: Centre for the Greek Language, 2012), 101–119; Emilio Crespo, "Languages and Dialects in Ancient Macedon", in *Ancient Macedonia: Language, History, Culture*, ed. Georgios K. Giannakis (Thessaloniki: Centre for the Greek Language, 2012), 121–131. Cf. Sulochana Asirvatham, "The Roots of the Macedonian Ambiguity in Classical Athenian Literature", in *Macedonian Legacies, Studies in Ancient Macedonian History and Culture in Honor of Eugene Borza*, ed. Timothy Howe and Jeanne Reames (Claremont: Regina Books, 2008), 235–255; Eugene N. Borza, "Greek and Macedonian Ethnicity", in *The Landmark Arrian. The Campaigns of Alexander: A New Translation*, ed. James S. Romm (New York: Pantheon Books, 2010), Appendix B, 333–336.

During the protests in 1992–1995 the Greek people's fear of Skopje's irredentist views was surely fomented by their politicians, but the stalemate was also exacerbated by the provocative claims of FYROM's nationalist right parties about Alexander the Great as their true ancestor and even about Thessaloniki as their capital. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the literate Slav-speaking Orthodox Christians of the Yugoslav Vardaska Banovina province were developing a feeling of Macedonian National identity,⁵³ acknowledging both their Slavic origins and their "previous Bulgarian ethnic status";⁵⁴ only after the formal political recognition of the Republic of Macedonia in 1991, did the extremist national parties gradually begin to deny any connection with the Slavs who settled in the area in the sixth century AD and to claim that the Slavo-Macedonians were descendant of Alexander the Great. To reinforce these assertions, they appropriated symbols associated with Graeco-Macedonian antiquity, such as the aforementioned Sun (Star) of Vergina, and included Greek territories into the lands of the Republic in several geographical maps for schoolbooks.⁵⁵ Interestingly, the Sun was unearthed in Vergina only relatively recently, during the excavations conducted by Manolis Andronikos in 1977,⁵⁶ and before its discovery no one ever knew about this magnificent Macedonian symbol. Soon, however, the Sun became charged by contemporary Greeks with a political meaning, and it became the emblem of the Hellenic—the only possible—Macedonia. From the Greeks' point of view, FYROM's appropriation of Argead history and symbols, which have been for so many centuries intertwined with Hellenic history, was understandably perceived as provocative and outrageous;⁵⁷ on the other hand, although the Republic's moderate parties recognized that their Slavic descent deprived them of any biological

53 See Krsté P. Misirkov, *On the Macedonian Matters*, [Engl. Transl. Alan McConnell from the original *За македонските работи*, *Za makedonckite rabot*, Sofia 1903], (Skopje: Grafichki zadov Golcé Delchev, 1974), 123: the Macedonians have a separate Slavic ethnicity; they are not Bulgarians, Serbs, nor Greeks.

54 Misirkov, *On the Macedonian Matters*, 115, states that Slavo-Macedonians called themselves Bulgarians simply because their national consciousness had not been awakened yet. On the ethnic plurality of Macedonia's wider geographical area, see Henry N. Brailsford, *Macedonia. Its Races and their Future* (London: Methuen & co., 1971²), 101–107.

55 R. Brian Ferguson, *The State, Identity and Violence: Political Disintegration in the Post-Cold War World* (London: Routledge, 2003), 202. Danforth, *Ancient Macedonia*, 582.

56 See above fn. 46.

57 See Nikolaos M. Martis, *The Falsification of Macedonian History*, [Engl. Transl. John Philip Smith], (Athens: Graphic Arts, 1984), 13–19. Cf. the discussion of the letter sent to President Obama in 2009 regarding the Macedonian Question in Andreas Willi, "Whose Is Macedonia, Whose Is Alexander", *CJ* 105, no. 1 (2009): 59–64.

connection with Alexander the Great, they still maintained that the ancient Macedonians were a non-Greek people living in the area, and accused Greeks of exploiting Argead symbols as much as FYROM's extremist parties.⁵⁸

After the election of Nikola Gruevski as Prime Minister in 2006, the Macedonian Question was ignited again, as Greeks felt particularly vexed by FYROM's policies. Specifically, Gruevski's project *Skopje 2014*,⁵⁹ which aimed at the "antiquization" of the capital within few years through several monumental constructions and pompous public acts, such as the naming of the airport of Skopje after Alexander the Great in 2006, and the erection of giant bronze statues of Alexander and Philip II in the city centre in 2010 and 2012 respectively, was felt to be particularly offensive to the Greeks.⁶⁰ Gruevski's "antiquization plan" can be described as "Macedonization": the goal was the creation of strong ties between the modern Slavic population and the ancient Argeads. By enthusing pride in Macedonian antiquity, the former Prime Minister wished to build a strong sense of Macedonian national identity in a country where many still felt Bulgarian or Albanian.

Conclusions

My purpose in this paper has been to shed light on the use of the great conqueror in Greek music as a means to criticize, disprove, contrast and scoff at

58 Danforth, *Ancient Macedonia*, 575; 581.

59 Sinisa Jakov Marusic, "Skopje 2014: the New Face of Macedonia, Updated", *Balkan Insight*, 11.05.2012, <https://balkanstory.wordpress.com/2012/05/11/skopje-2014-the-new-face-of-macedonia-updated/> (accessed 10-03-2016).

60 Danforth, *Ancient Macedonia*, 583–584, points out that Greeks too manipulated Alexander and the ancient Macedonian heritage: see, for example, the name of the airport in Thessaloniki changed to "Airport of Macedonia" in 1992. *Contra*, Kyriakos Kentrotis, "Echoes from the Past: Greece and the Macedonian Controversy", *Mediterranean Politics* 1 (1994): 95, states that "the outdated notion that the Macedonians were not Greek was completely demolished by the archaeological investigations and excavations in and around Vergina in the 1970s and 1980s. The fact that the ancient Macedonians used the Greek language is attested by the vast number of finds from tombs and inscriptions, all of which, without exception, bear only Greek names. One very clear illustration of the continuity of the Greek language over more than twenty-six centuries is given by a ring of the sixth century BC, which was found at Sindos and is now on display in the Archaeological Museum in Thessaloniki. It is inscribed 'ΔΩΡΟΝ' (gift)"; furthermore, (p. 99) "the Vergina finds have been displayed in archaeological exhibitions all around the world as an integral part of Greece's cultural heritage".

the political agenda of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Notwithstanding the diversity of the genres, target-audiences and linguistic registers, and the wide pool of themes and stratified traditions evoked, the songs examined share the same aim: to reaffirm Alexander's—and thus Macedonia's—Hellenicity, and to reinforce the claims of the Hellenic State in the international political debate opened by the as yet unanswered Macedonian Question.

In the songs, Alexander the Great, ancient Greek culture and continuity from the past form a common thread which replicates the core of the Hellenic State's discourse: while seeking for the glorification of Macedonia as a free Greek land, *Famous Macedonia* heralds anti-Slavic feeling, since Greeks feel that both Bulgarians and the Slavo-Macedonians have tried to seize Graeco-Macedonian history and ethnic identity. Graeco-Macedonians are presented as a free and glorious people, matching their forefather Alexander's qualities. In *Oh Alexander* the great conqueror's campaign is used to praise ancient knowledge and civilisation, described in one word as (τα) φώτα, "the lights of culture". Alexander is presented as the Greeks' ancestor and a champion of Hellenic language and culture, leaving no room for doubts about his Greekness. *The Girl from Skopje* satirizes the political deadlock between the Hellenic state and FYROM through the description of an "illegitimate" love story; Alexander is mentioned only in the lullaby section, but the whole jingoistic syllogism about Macedonia's uninterrupted Hellenicity is constructed around his figure and his indisputable Greekness.

Alexander embodies Greeks' pride in what they feel to be their own past; through these songs Greeks can boast centuries of history and give voice to their expectation for the Hellenic past to be *respected*, i.e. to be recognized internationally as their own.

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The Conscience of the King: Alexander the Great and the Ancient Disabled

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Alexander the Great is the most widely known secular historical figure in Western culture today. Most people know of him or his story. While attention has been paid to some of the people surrounding Alexander the Great, there is almost no recognition that some of those people were disabled. Among them are Alexander's half brother Arrhidaeus, his friend Harpalus, his father Philip II, and a group of mutilated Greeks who Alexander and his army encountered while traveling to Persepolis. By carefully examining the ancient sources, modern historical literature, disability studies, popular movies, educational and popular TV shows, and historical fiction books, we will see that these differently-abled people have, with a few exceptions, either been forgotten about or almost completely erased in both modern historical scholarship and popular media—to the overall detriment of both history and the character of Alexander the Great himself. Through these omissions, Alexander's more compassionate nature as well as his humane side are erased from history as well.

Arrhidaeus, the first subject of discussion, also known as Philip III Arrhidaeus, Alexander's half-brother, is reported to have been mentally disabled. Plutarch mentions that Arrhidaeus was a “bastard brother, who was also a fool”, and “deficient in intellect owing to bodily disease. This, however, did not come upon him in the course of nature or of its own accord, indeed, it is said that as a boy he displayed an exceedingly gifted and noble disposition: but after Olympias gave him drugs which injured his body and ruined his mind.”¹ Justin mentions in regard to Arrhidaeus's succession of Alexander that Ptolemy objected to Arrhidaeus as king, “not only on account of the meanness of his mother (he being the son of a courtesan of Larissa), but because of the extraordinary weakness with which he was affected, lest, while he had the name of king, another should exercise the authority.”² Diodorus describes Arrhidaeus

1 Plutarch, *Loeb Classical Library: The Parallel Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919), 250–251, 439.

2 Justin, *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*, trans. John Selby Watson. (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853), 13.2.

as, “son of Philip ... although he was afflicted with an incurable mental illness.”³ Quintus Curtius Rufus does not portray Arrhidaeus as mentally disabled, but there may be a reason for this. Rufus most likely wrote his biography of Alexander during the reign of the Roman emperor Claudius, who also had a disability, most likely cerebral palsy.⁴ Therefore it would not have been prudent for him to portray Arrhidaeus as mentally incompetent, since he was making the comparison between Arrhidaeus and Claudius as both, if only temporarily, reunited their respective empires. Arrian does not mention Arrhidaeus’ disability (but this could be due to some of Arrian’s work being lost), but does mention that when he was made king after Alexander’s death, that Perdiccas was made the guardian of the king, not a usual Macedonian practice.

Interestingly, Arrian also notes that, “Arrhidaeus, who kept the body of Alexander with him, contrary to the wish of Perdiccas, took it from Babylon by way of Damascus to Ptolemy the son of Lagus in Egypt; and though often hindered on his journey by Polemon, a friend of Perdiccas, nevertheless succeeded in carrying out his intention.”⁵ This suggests that despite Arrhidaeus’ disability, he was mentally aware enough to make his own decisions, defy the will of others, and succeed at doing what he wanted, despite the obstacles created by others. There are some historians who believe that the Arrhidaeus mentioned above is a different Arrhidaeus, but this may say more about the unconscious bias that exists against the disabled than anything else; since in their minds, because Arrhidaeus was mentally disabled he would not have been capable of making decisions for himself.⁶ Other historians think that the two Arrhidaeuses are one and the same.⁷ It is particularly interesting if there were indeed two Arrhidaeuses that there is no title or nickname given to one to distinguish them from each other, as was seen in the case of Kleitus the Black and Kleitus the White, Ptolemy son of Lagos, or any of the other Macedonians referred to as the “son of” someone when they are mentioned in

3 Diodorus Siculus, *Loeb Classical Library: Library of History*, trans. Russell M. Geer. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), 15.

4 Andrew Chugg, *The Death of Alexander the Great: A Reconstruction of Cleitarchus* (Bristol: Andrew Michael Chugg, 2009), 32–33.

5 Saint Photius, *The Library of Photius: Volume 1*, trans. John Henry Freese. (Princeton: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920), 162.

6 Waldemar Heckel, *Who’s Who in the Age of Alexander the Great: Prosopography of Alexander’s Empire*. (Singapore: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 52–53.

7 Elizabeth D. Carney, “The Trouble with Philip Arrhidaeus”, *Ancient History Bulletin* 15 (2001): 63–89.

the historical record. At any rate there is no way to conclusively prove or disprove the existence of another Arrhidaeus.

Philip seemed to have found Arrhidaeus at least somewhat mentally competent as he arranged a marriage proposal between Arrhidaeus and the daughter of the barbarian Pixodarus. This marriage proposal was originally Philip II's plan as part of a peace agreement. However, this part of the peace negotiations fell through due to meddling by Olympias and Alexander. When Philip found out about the plot, his response was that he had intended to save Alexander for bigger and better things than just the ruler of a small satrapy. This statement and the negotiations show that Philip saw Arrhidaeus as competent enough to become the successor to a satrapy, when Pixodarus died. There is no way Philip, who was preparing to invade Asia, would have jeopardized the peace agreement, by marrying off a mentally disabled son who would have been found lacking by Pixodarus and family. Arrhidaeus was made a regent after Alexander's death and survived for seven years until Olympias assassinated him. Prior to this he had survived the numerous purges and assassinations of family members whom Alexander the Great had considered threats. This suggests that Alexander either didn't see him as a threat, or that Alexander loved his half-brother enough to not have him killed, but rather protected.

Harpalus, who had a physical infirmity, is the next person in our discussion. He is described by the ancient historians as Alexander's close friend and treasurer. He was one of Alexander's childhood friends who was exiled after the botched marriage proposal to Pixodarus. Arrian mentions, "Harpalus had first gone into exile during Philip's reign because of his loyalty to Alexander ... At Philip's death, everyone who had gone into exile on Alexander's account returned. Alexander appointed ... Harpalus as treasurer (since his body was unfit for warfare)."⁸ Arrian is the only ancient historian to describe Harpalus as physically impaired; the others just talk about his being made satrap, his love of gardening and his inability to get ivy to grow, and his embezzling from his treasury position resulting in his eventual death.⁹ The Macedonians seemed to have

8 Arrian, *The Landmark Arrian: The Campaigns of Alexander*. trans. Pamela Mensch & edited by James Romm (New York: Pantheon Books, 2010), 110.

9 Diodorus Siculus, *Loeb Classical Library: Library of History*. trans. Charles L. Sherman. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), 437–439; Justin, *Pompeius Trogus*. trans. John Selby Watson, 12.5; Quintus Curtius Rufus, *The History of Alexander*. trans. John Yardley. (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 218, 241; Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, 60–61, 192–193.

considered him able-bodied enough since he was one of Alexander's friends who were exiled. Diodorus and Plutarch also mention that Harpalus had a daughter who was taken care of by close friends after Harpalus' death, since her mother, the courtesan Pythonice, had predeceased Harpalus.¹⁰ Alexander evidently trusted Harpalus since he at first refused to believe reports of his embezzling and later fleeing to Athens, and also requested that he send him books while he was campaigning in Asia Minor. Surprisingly, despite the infirmity only being mentioned in one ancient source, it is not questioned by modern day historians that Harpalus had a physical disability.

Philip II, Alexander's father, is reported to have lost an eye in battle during the siege of Methone in 356 BC and developed a limp due to another war injury much later in his career. Plutarch does not mention any injuries and does not use injury as an explanation for Philip's fall when he attempted to kill Alexander: "Then Philip rose up against him with drawn sword, but, fortunately for both, his anger and his wine made him trip and fall."¹¹ Arrian does not mention Philip except in terms of what he had left to Alexander, and Alexander being absolved of his murder. Diodorus mentions Philip's eye injury: "In this siege it so happened that Philip was struck in the eye by an arrow and lost the sight of that eye."¹² He also mentions Philip's character:

He is known to fame as one who with but the slenderest resources to support his claim to a throne won for himself the greatest empire in the Greek world, while the growth of his position was not due so much to his prowess in arms as to his adroitness and cordiality in diplomacy. Philip himself is said to have been prouder of his grasp of strategy and his diplomatic successes than of his valour in actual battle.¹³

Curtius Rufus does not directly reference Philip, instead only mentioning him in reference to Alexander, but the beginning of his text is lost so this is not surprising. Justin describes Philip's eye wound: "While he was besieging Methone, an arrow, shot from the walls at him as he was passing by, struck out his right eye; but by this wound he was neither rendered less active in the siege, nor more

10 Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, trans. Charles L. Sherman, 437–439; Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, 192–193.

11 Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, 249.

12 Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, trans. Charles L. Sherman, 333.

13 Diodorus Siculus, *Loeb Classical Library: Library of History*. trans. C. Bradford Welles. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 102–103.

resentful towards the enemy.” In addition, he mentions his leg wound: “[it was] so severe a wound through the thigh, that his horse was killed by it”.¹⁴ Justin also describes Philip’s character:

As a king, he was more inclined to display in war, than in entertainments; and his greatest riches were means for military operations. He was better at getting wealth than keeping it, and, in consequence, was always poor amidst his daily spoliations. Clemency and perfidy were equally valued by him; and no road to victory was, in his opinion, dishonorable. He was equally pleasing and treacherous in his address, promising more than he could perform. He was well qualified either for serious conversation or for jesting. He maintained friendships more with a view to interest than good faith. It was a common practice with him to pretend kindness where he hated, and to counterfeit dislike where he loved; to sow dissension among friends, and try to gain favour from both sides. With such a disposition, his eloquence was very great, his language full of point and studied effect; so that neither did his facility fall short of his art, nor his invention of his facility, nor his art of his invention.¹⁵

Justin also mentions Philip’s attempt to kill Alexander, but does not mention the limp as the reason for this attempt failing, instead saying, “and hence it happened that [Alexander] had previously quarrelled at a banquet, first with Attalus, and afterwards with his father himself, insomuch that Philip pursued him even with his drawn sword, and was hardly prevented from killing him by the entreaties of his friends.”¹⁶ Only one ancient historian directly mentions both of Philip’s wounds. Despite being so horribly wounded, Philip retained his position as king, and the respect of his soldiers and people. This shows that these wounds were not seen as an ostracizing condition in ancient times. This also may show that there were two different classes of the disabled in ancient Greece, especially when paired with any of the other disabled people mentioned in this chapter: that of the war wounded, and that of the congenitally disabled, with the congenitally disabled being treated slightly differently than the war wounded. This separation may have also extended to a difference in how those who were physically disabled and those who were considered

14 Justin, *Pompeius Trogus*. trans. John Selby Watson, 7.6, 8.3.

15 Ibid., 8.1.

16 Ibid., 7.1.

mentally disabled were treated, since many congenital disabilities also have a mental component. Whereas most war injuries, at least in that time period, resulted in obvious physical disability.

Interestingly, none of the above impairments are disputed in current historical scholarship, possibly because it makes things easier for scholars to label and explain. However, while acknowledged, modern day historians take one of three directions with these disabilities. They either minimize them to the point where they are seen as completely unimportant; they use them to explain everything about these historical figures, especially in the case of Arrhidaeus; or they leave out these particular historical figures entirely in their biographies and other scholarly work about Alexander the Great, Macedon, and ancient Greece. Examples of biographers and historians leaving historical figures out entirely include Robert Garland in his landmark book, *The Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World*. Despite the entire book being about the disabled populations of the ancient Greek and Roman world, no one from the above list is ever mentioned directly. In fact the only reference to anyone from the time period of Alexander besides the orator Demosthenes, who is reported to have overcome a speech impediment, is an indirect reference to Arrhidaeus, as follows: “Plutarch also reports the birth of a lamb wearing a tiara with testicles on its head in the time of Alexander the Great, which the latter saw as a warning that he would be succeeded by ‘a baseborn and impotent man.’ Alexander underwent purifications by the Babylonians in a vain attempt to negate its implications.”¹⁷

Garland himself seems to fall prey to the belief that populations of disabled individuals in the ancient past were ill-treated and ostracized by society in general. However, there are those such as Michel Foucault, who think that the idea of disability causing ostracism from society is a relatively new concept that first started with the industrialization of the world (c. 18th–19th century), and the shift towards privatizing and individualizing the disciplinary regime, creating the idea of a descending power—that those people who are more individualized in appearance or mind, have the most power exerted over them, primarily to bring them in line with “normal” thus also creating binaries of normal and abnormal, mad and sane, and dangerous and harmless.¹⁸ Foucault also thought

17 Robert Garland, *The Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), 66.

18 Meghan Henning, The Work of Michel Foucault: Discursive Practices as “Rituals of Truth”, in *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature*, ed. Candida R. Moss & Jeremy Shipper, (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2011), 187–188. 186–189.

that the idea of disability itself is a relatively new socially constructed concept, again created by the institution of private spaces to deal with discipline in society, i.e. reform schools, penitentiaries, and insane asylums.¹⁹ The truth of how disabled people were treated in the ancient world probably lies somewhere in between what Garland and Foucault believe, and the individuals involved.

Some examples of scholars using disability as a crutch to explain everything about certain historical figures include most historians' treatment of Arrhidaeus. Certain scholars insist that there are two Arrhidaeuses because at least in their mind, Arrhidaeus was not capable of doing anything due to his mental disability,²⁰ and only two scholars bother going into any detail about Arrhidaeus's life.²¹ As one scholar puts it, "Ancient and modern prejudice about mental disability has led to an oversimplified interpretation of Arrhidaeus' role in the political history of the late 4th century BC."²² However there is no distinction in the ancient sources between the two Arrhidaeuses, nor is the second one referred to as the son of someone other than Philip (another common naming convention in the ancient world), and nothing more is known about the supposed second one other than that he was a satrap and was in charge of Alexander's funeral car, which he helped hijack and take to Egypt. It is also suspicious that despite the numerous changes of his guardian, Arrhidaeus was able to hold onto power for nearly seven years after the death of Alexander, before being assassinated by Olympias. As mentioned earlier, Arrhidaeus was to be married to the daughter of Pixodarus, an event with which Olympias interfered. However, as mentioned earlier, this incident shows that Philip II and Olympias saw Arrhidaeus as competent enough to be married, and rule over a satrapy.

This treatment is just as disturbing as erasing these historical figures from existence, as it feeds into the narrative that only the able-bodied are capable of doing anything of historical significance. Essentially defining a person's entire existence by their disability—which perpetuates the narrative that they are less of a person because they are disabled. It is however puzzling to note that despite Arrhidaeus's treatment in historical scholarship, in archaeological scholarship there was a debate until 2010 over whether or not the tomb discovered in Vergina in the late 1970s by Manolis Andronikos

19 Ibid., 187–188.

20 Heckel, *Who's Who in the Age of Alexander*, 52–53.

21 Carney, "The Trouble with Philip Arrhidaeus", 63–89; W.S. Greenwalt, "The Search for Arrhidaeus", *Ancient World* 10 (1984): 69–77.

22 Carney, "The Trouble with Philip Arrhidaeus", 63.

belonged to Philip II or Arrhidaeus.²³ Archaeologists were at least willing to believe that despite his disability and assassination, Arrhidaeus was given a full royal burial in recognition of his status as regent and son of Philip II. All of the modern day historical accounts minimize Arrhidaeus's relationship with Alexander the Great, and some leave Arrhidaeus out completely. This does both Alexander and Arrhidaeus a disservice: Alexander, by completely neglecting to mention the compassion he felt towards someone who was disabled, thereby negating a large portion of his character, which was repeated with both Harpalus and his attitude towards the maimed prisoners in Persia; and Arrhidaeus, by writing him off as less than a person because of his mental disability.

Finally, some examples of scholars minimizing these disabilities' importance include many modern historians treatment of Philip II, Alexander's father. Philip II lost an eye and later had a limp due to war injuries. However, while noted by historians, there is rarely a discussion of the impact of these injuries on Philip II, or on the societal implications of a king sustaining these disabling injuries in a culture that supposedly despised disability according to Garland. Instead they are mentioned and brushed over, never really factored into anything again. Most historians blame Philip's fall when he tried to murder Alexander on drunkenness, and leave out that his leg and probable lack of depth perception due to only having one eye could have played a factor in the fall, as well as the alcohol. It would be interesting to see if Philip got a pass for these injuries because he was royalty, or if war injuries were considered to be less traumatizing and ostracizing to the ancient Macedonians and ancient Greeks than congenital disability, especially mental disability. However because of the minimization of disability in the historical narrative, it is quite difficult to tell. From what we know of the other cases discussed in this chapter, it seems that the congenitally disabled were treated differently than the war wounded, and this played into the decision of the mutilated Greeks to stay in Persia, as we shall see next.

The group of mutilated Greeks as mentioned by the ancient historians were said to be eight hundred in number. They were captives of the Persians, and had been trained in various crafts and then branded, with whatever body parts that were unessential to completing their tasks amputated by the Persians. This included feet, hands, noses, and ears. Some of them were also blinded. Alexan-

23 Amina Khan, "Thanks to a Lame Leg, King Philip II's Body Identified in Ancient Tomb", *Los Angeles Times*, July 21, 2015; Angela M.H. Schuster, "Not Philip II of Macedon", *Archaeology*, April 20, 2000.

der the Great and his men encountered this group on their way to Persepolis. The incident is mentioned in Quintus Curtius Rufus, Diodorus Siculus, and Justin, with Curtius Rufus giving the most detailed account, while Justin only mentions the incident in passing.²⁴ However, despite three of the five major ancient historians of Alexander mentioning the incident, no significant attention is paid to it by any modern day historians of Alexander, with most dismissing it as probably not true.²⁵ The only recognition of the significance of this group of mutilated Greeks occurs in “Segregated We Stand? The Mutilated Greeks’ Debate at Persepolis, 330 BC”, by M. Miles in *Disability & Society* 18. Alexander’s reaction to this group is compassionate, and he gives them the choice of staying where they are and being provided for, or of returning to Greece with an escort and financial compensation. This choice was not out of character for Alexander who frequently settled his new cities with disabled Greek war veterans.²⁶ Alexander tells the mutilated Greeks, according to Quintus Curtius Rufus, “Nobody can consider his condition in life superior to yours”, and weeps openly with them.²⁷ The men ultimately decide to stay, as they are afraid they will be ridiculed if they return to Greece. They are also reluctant to leave behind their Persian wives and children for families who will no longer recognize them if they return. This incident reveals that there are indeed two different classes of disabled in Greece, that of the war wounded, and that of the congenitally disabled. These men seem to fit in the first class—war wounded—but are afraid they will be placed in the second class of disabled Greeks, hence part of their motivation to stay. Miles correctly recognizes that this is the first historically documented case of the disabled being able to decide things about their futures themselves, and actually even being asked for their opinion on matters.²⁸ This shows that Alexander the Great could be a compassionate, just ruler, who was ahead of his time in that regard. It also reveals the part of his character that has mostly been overlooked by historians: one who recognized that disability was not a person’s fault, and that these people could still be contributing members of society—so unlike the Spartan values he was taught by Leonides at an early age, and also so unlike the teachings of Aristotle who advocated laws leaving deformed children to die of exposure.²⁹

24 M. Miles, “Segregated We Stand? The Mutilated Greeks’ Debate at Persepolis, 330 BC”, *Disability & Society* 18 (2003): 868.

25 Ibid., 872.

26 Robin Lane Fox. *Alexander the Great*. (New York; Penguin, 1986), 303.

27 Quintus Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander*, trans. John Yardley, 103–105.

28 Miles, “Persepolis, 330 BC”, 871.

29 Garland, *The Eye of the Beholder*, 15, 149.

Strangely, unlike the physical and mental impairments of the individuals already discussed, there is debate among modern day scholars as to the veracity of this community, with scholars concluding that it was most likely fictitious, or a metaphor for the Gortuae/Euboean population losing their Greek heritage.³⁰ Older scholars such as Dodge treated the incident as fact, referencing that mutilation in the East was a common practice.³¹ At present the story can neither be conclusively proven nor disproven. However, given other examples of Persian punishments found elsewhere in the ancient biographies of Alexander and in other sources (the punishment of Bessus, and the Persian torture, murder, and mutilation of the wounded who were left behind to recover in the Battle of Issus),³² it seems likely that the incident was at least plausible. One has to question why many scholars are so quick to jump on the “not true” bandwagon (mostly arguing that this was a rhetorical set-up for the sake of having one), and why the incident was mentioned at all by the ancient historians if it wasn’t true. This seems suspicious especially when Curtius Rufus is mentioned as being a completely trustworthy source by these same scholars when referring to other people and incidents in Alexander’s life.³³ Curtius Rufus would have had nothing to gain by saying that the captive Greeks were disabled and that the Greeks back in Greece would have treated their own poorly, especially since he was doing a comparison of Arrhidaeus to Claudius, and did not mention Arrhidaeus’s disability. Curtius Rufus’s version undoubtedly has some embellishment, but that doesn’t mean that there is no truth to the incident at all, especially since Diodorus and Justin also mention it. As was noted by Ian Sharples in his article “Curtius’ Treatment of Arrhidaeus”, Curtius Rufus was a historian first, and there is “no reason to believe that he ever consciously falsified history.”³⁴ Arrian tends to mostly focus on battles and things relating to war in his biography of Alexander, so it is not surprising that the incident is not mentioned. Plutarch, focused on battle to a lesser extent, but also did not feel that this incident was worth mentioning. The recognition and treatment of the former captives in Persia as people who deserved to be listened to and taken care of was consistent with Alexander the Great’s behaviour towards his older half-brother Arrhidaeus, and his friend Harpalus, and therefore was not out of character for the ruler at all.

30 Justin, *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus: Volume 1, Books 11–12, Alexander the Great*. trans. John Yardley & Waldemar Heckel. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 97, 174.

31 Theodore Ayrault Dodge, *Alexander*. (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1890), 408.

32 Arrian, *Campaigns of Alexander*. trans. Pamela Mensch, 67.

33 Heckel, *Who’s Who in the Age of Alexander*, 45.

34 Ian Sharples, “Curtius’ Treatment of Arrhidaeus”, *Mediterranean Archaeology* 7 (1994): 60.

The humane treatment of those who had been maimed as a result of war is also seen in one of the earliest movies made about Alexander the Great, despite the otherwise erasure of the historical figures mentioned above. In the 1941 Bollywood film *Sikandar*, none of the above historical figures are mentioned. However, it includes a scene in which, after the battle with Porus in India, the Indians are coming home from the battle at night. Among them were the war wounded, many of whom are shown to have lost legs, arms, and to have suffered many other serious injuries. People help them move, and their families for the most part are happy to see them. This entire scene is used as the backdrop for a love song sung by a woman who is happy that the war with Alexander is finally over, and that her husband is coming home alive.³⁵ This scene is completely unlike the later 2004 Oliver Stone movie *Alexander the Great*, where wounded soldiers are killed, rather than allowed to live with their injuries, and is a reflection of the differences between pre-industrialized and industrialized societies.³⁶ India, at the time *Sikandar* was made, was not fully industrialized, and was occupied by the British. The United States at the time of the Oliver Stone film was fully industrialized.³⁷ These differences are a direct example of Foucault's theory that the concept of disability as something to be despised only arose because of the industrialization of society.

In the 1956 Richard Burton epic, *Alexander*, Arrhidaeus is erased completely from the narrative; Philip is given a limp, but has normal vision; and Harpalus is portrayed as able-bodied. No mention is made of the Persian village.³⁸ Similarly in the 1964 TV movie, *Alexander the Great* starring William Shatner, all three historical figures are erased from the narrative.³⁹ Once again, no mention is made of the Persian village. These omissions in the William Shatner version are slightly more understandable than any of the other examples mentioned, as the TV movie was meant to be a pilot for a longer series that was cancelled. However, within the running time of the movie, the plot got all the way to Alexander pursuing King Darius III across Persia. Therefore, one would expect to see at least brief mentions of Philip and Harpalus, and perhaps the group of mutilated Greeks. However they do not make an appearance, nor are they even mentioned.

35 *Sikandar*, Directed by Sohrab Modi. (1941. India: Minerva Movietone). VHS.

36 *Alexander*, Directed by Oliver Stone. (2004. United States: Warner Bros Pictures & Inter-media Films). DVD.

37 Edmund Wright, *A Dictionary of World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 537.

38 *Alexander the Great*, Directed by Robert Rossen. (1956. United States: C.B. Films S.A. & Rossen Films). DVD.

39 *Alexander the Great*, Directed by Phil Karlson. (1964. United States: MGM Television). DVD.

Both the TV movie and the film might simply be a reflection of the culture of the time in which they were made, as this was the same decade when the original series of *Star Trek*, also starring William Shatner, was broadcast. An interracial kiss as seen on the 1968 *Star Trek* episode "Plato's Stepchildren", caused considerable anxiety for TV executives.⁴⁰ They insisted on shooting an alternate take of the scene without the kiss, while the network censors only deemed the kiss itself acceptable since it was deemed involuntary in the context of the show because the two participants were forced through telekinesis.⁴¹ It was only because the actors involved in the scene (William Shatner and Nichelle Nichols) deliberately botched the alternate take during filming that the kiss scene was aired at all.⁴² However, despite the controversy over the kiss, portraying characters shown demeaning and abusing a dwarf named Alexander was perfectly acceptable in this same episode. During the time period in which *Star Trek* and the Shatner version of *Alexander* was made, the warehousing of physically and mentally disabled children in inhumane conditions, as had been exposed in 1965 at the Willowbrook State School on Staten Island, did not seem to cause many people concern either. It wasn't until 1987 that the school was shut down permanently.⁴³ The cultural attitude of the United States at the time was to isolate and erase the disabled entirely. It is also interesting to note that it wasn't until 1987, the year of Willowbrook's closure, that a congenitally disabled character was placed in a leading role in a multi-season TV show for the first time. The show was the next installment of the *Star Trek* franchise, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and the character was Geordi La Forge, the ship's chief engineer and helmsman, who was blind because of a birth defect.⁴⁴ Prior to this, any depictions of leading disabled characters had been of accident victims or those wounded in war or the line of duty, such as the character of Robert T. Ironside in *Ironside*.⁴⁵ *Star Trek: The*

40 Nichelle Nichols, *Beyond Uhura: Star Trek and Other Memories*. (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1994), 195–196.

41 Alan Asherman, *The Star Trek Compendium*. (New York: Pocket Books, 1989), 119–120.

42 Nichols, *Beyond Uhura*, 195–196.

43 Staff, "Excerpts from Statements by Kennedy", *The New York Times*, September 10, 1965; Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, *Milestones in OMRDD's History Related to Willowbrook*. <http://mn.gov/mnddc/extra/wbrook/wbrook-timeline.htm>.

44 Michael Okuda, Denise Okuda, and Debbie Mirek, *The Star Trek Encyclopedia: A Reference Guide for the Future*. (New York, Pocket Books, 1994), 168.

45 *Are You Having a Laugh? TV and Disability*, Directed by Mark Allen and Mark Murray. (2010. United Kingdom: BBC). Documentary; Jerome A. Holst "Physically Challenged, (Disabled)" *TVAcres*, http://www.tvacres.com/handicapped_coverpage.htm.

Next Generation was also remarkable in that Geordi chose to remain blind on two separate occasions when people offered him a cure.⁴⁶ Given the above, it seems likely that depicting someone with a noticeable disability in a historical drama would not have gone over well with the American public at the time, as they were doing their best to pretend that the disabled did not exist. These two versions of *Alexander the Great* are therefore a reflection of the prejudice, ignorance, and erasure of those with disabilities that existed during this time period, and the preference for stories about hetero-normative people. It probably didn't even occur to the writers and actors of these two incarnations of *Alexander* to write any of these characters or their disabilities into the narrative.

In Oliver Stone's 2004 *Alexander*, Philip is correctly portrayed as missing his eye, but his limp only seems to occur when Val Kilmer remembers it. Harpalus and Arrhidaeus are once again erased. Despite being a long, highly detailed movie, the Persian village is once again not mentioned.⁴⁷ All of these omissions play into the incorrect assumption today that the disabled were treated horribly in the past. This incorrect assumption is seen again in a scene that is strangely out of place in the movie as well. It depicts a mercy killing of a wounded soldier after the battle of Gaugemela, despite this having no historical basis.⁴⁸ The word euthanasia didn't even come into existence until the Hellenistic Period after Alexander's death.⁴⁹ Oliver Stone seems to say in this scene that it was better to end up dead than disabled in the ancient Greek world, which was not true, as seen in how Philip II and other war veterans were treated after they were wounded in battle. Alexander himself gave those who were injured or who wanted to settle down what are essentially today severance packages, and also provided for the families of his soldiers if they were killed while under his service. It seems that the incorrect assumption that the disabled were treated horribly in the past played some part in Stone's decision to include this scene in the film.

In the recent PBS TV series *The Greeks*, Philip II, despite having both animated and sculptural depictions, is portrayed as being able-bodied, with his

46 *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, "Hide and Q", and "Loud as a Whisper", Directed by Cliff Bole & Larry Shaw. (1987, 1989. United States: Paramount Television). TV Show.

47 *Alexander*, Stone, 2004.

48 Hippocrates, *Loeb Classical Library: Hippocrates Volume III*. trans. E.T. Withington. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 13, 49, 77–81; Fox, *Alexander the Great*, 102; John D. Papadimitrou et al., "Euthanasia and Suicide in Antiquity: Viewpoint of the Dramatists and Philosophers", *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 100 (2007): 25–28.

49 Papadimitrou et al., "Euthanasia and Suicide in Antiquity", 25–28.

limp and his missing eye both surprisingly absent. The time of Philip and Alexander is covered in the last episode of *The Greeks, Chasing Greatness*, which aired July 5, 2016. In the section of the episode, which covers Philip and Alexander, Philip's achievements are mentioned, such as his conquering of the entire Greek world except Sparta and his desire to become a philosopher king and conquer Persia, but he is not portrayed as disabled, nor are any of his war injuries even mentioned.⁵⁰ Instead, only the idealized busts of him are used, despite them showing his tomb and talking to one of the archaeologists who discovered it, and in the cartoon portrayal of him he is shown fully able-bodied. Alexander and his men are portrayed similarly, and Harpalus, Arrhidaeus, and the Greek captives are not mentioned at all. The whole idea of disability or war injuries is left out of the narrative entirely. Similarly in an earlier episode from the series, no mention is made of Homer possibly being blind.⁵¹ This is a disservice to history and to people watching the program because it continues to propagate the narrative that only the able-bodied were capable of doing anything noteworthy in ancient history. That disabilities and those with them are erased from the narrative entirely is somewhat surprising given the shift towards being more inclusive in TV and film. However this shift seems to be focused mostly on racial diversity. Disability still does not seem to come up.

In the much acclaimed documentary *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great*, narrated by historian Michael Wood, Philip is correctly described as missing an eye and having a limp, but Arrhidaeus is left out completely, as are Harpalus and the mutilated Greeks in Persia.⁵² The fact that these two figures and this particular community are left out entirely is extremely surprising, given Michael Wood's tendency to provide details about other events such as the fish-eaters along the Indian coast, Olympias murdering Philip's new wife and child, the Sogdian rock battle, Alexander's still-born child, and Alexander's regret over burning Persepolis, none of which are essential to the story of Alexander. In fact when Wood brings up the murders of Euridike and her child, it would have been prudent to mention Arrhidaeus and that Alexander moved him in order to prevent Olympias from killing him too, but Wood chooses not to. Similarly all mentions of Harpalus being one of Alexander's exiled friends, whom he later

50 *The Greeks*, Directed by Chad Cohen. (2016. United States: National Geographic Studios). TV Show.

51 Ibid.

52 *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great*, Directed by David Wallace. (1998. United Kingdom: Maryland Public Television) DVD.

rewarded are also left out, despite Wood mentioning the exile. The Persian captives are ignored and Philip's disabling injuries are mentioned, but only briefly. This was produced only eight years after the Americans with Disabilities act became law, so it is not surprising that there was not yet a shift towards being more inclusive. However, one has to question why these particular choices were made and why once again the disabled are eliminated from the narrative when they could have shed more light on the characters of Philip and Alexander. While slightly better than *The Greeks*, despite being an older program (1998), this once again plays into the narrative of the able-bodied controlling anything of significance in history.

Mary Renault is a world-renowned fiction writer and biographer of Alexander the Great, who mentions Arrhidaeus in her fictional Alexander trilogy *Fire From Heaven*, *The Persian Boy*, and *Funeral Games*. She also includes Harpalus, and does add Philip's injuries when discussing him: "Philip crumpled the letter and threw it down; then bending stiffly with his lame leg picked it up, flattened out the creases and locked it away."⁵³ Renault however excludes the group of mutilated Greeks completely from her trilogy. Harpalus is first mentioned in *Fire From Heaven*, the first book: "Alexander picked up his talk with Harpalos, a dark lively good looking youth with much offhand charm, whom fate had cursed with a clubfoot. Alexander had always admired the way he bore it."⁵⁴ Philip, however, having an injured leg and missing eye himself, thinks negatively of Harpalus in Renault's narrative: "Harpalos: I never trusted that limping fox, but the boy would have him."⁵⁵ Renault however leaves Arrhidaeus completely out of the first two books, apart from two brief indirect mentions. She writes, "Though ignorant of the supper party [Gyras] knew about the King's new wedding, and those before. There was already a boy from one of them. Folks said it had started bright enough, but had turned out an idiot, no doubt poisoned by the Queen. Maybe she only bribed the nurse to drop it on its head. Maybe it was a natural."⁵⁶ And she has Hephastion say:

'But how can you doubt you're his heir? Who else is there? Arridaaios?' The idiot had been in Pella lately, for one of the great festivals. His mother's kin had always brought him, spruced and combed, to pay his respects to his father, who had acknowledged him with pride when, a fine healthy-looking infant, he had been brought out of the birth-room. Now at sev-

53 Mary Renault, *The Alexander Trilogy*. (London: Penguin Books, 1984), 256.

54 Ibid., 117.

55 Ibid., 265.

56 Ibid., 103.

enteen, he was taller than Alexander, and favored Philip's looks, except when his mouth fell open. He was no longer taken to the theatre, where he would laugh loudly at the tragic climaxes, nor to solemn rites, in case one of his fits should take him, where he would flap on the ground like a landed fish, wetting and dirtying himself. It was the fits had done some violence to his mind, the doctors said: he had been a likely child before then. He enjoyed the side-shows of the feast, led about by an old family slave like a little boy with his pedagogue. This year his black beard had grown, but he would not be parted from his doll. 'What a rival!' Hephaestion said. 'Why can't you be easy?'⁵⁷

Arrhidaeus only shows up again in book three, *Funeral Games*, when he is needed to advance the plot after Alexander's death. This is also the same point where Arrhidaeus shows up historically in the ancient sources. Renault does mention the other Arrhidaeus in this book as well, but specifies that she changed his name to Arybbas in order to distinguish him from Philip III Arrhidaeus.⁵⁸ Again as mentioned earlier, given the propensity for the Macedonians to assign nicknames and titles to people with the same name, one wonders why the two weren't distinguished from each other in the historical narrative. Renault's portrayal of Harpalus and Arrhidaeus and their fellow Macedonians' attitudes towards them, reveals that Alexander's support of them both went against established Macedonian practice. This is also telling as it shows once again that there were two different classes of disabled in Macedon, that of the war wounded, and those with congenital disabilities. Overall, while her recognition of those with physical disabilities was compassionate, her portrayal of Arrhidaeus leaves much to be desired, and at least in the first book, she treats him as less than a person because of his mental impairment by having other characters referencing him as "it".

Conversely, Christian Cameron, in his historical fiction book *Alexander: God of War* leaves out Arrhidaeus completely, barely mentions Harpalus and does not mention Harpalus's disability at all, instead making him able-bodied. However within the context of the story, there is a reason for the near omission of Harpalus. There is however no reason given for making him able-bodied. When the narrator Ptolemy mentions Harpalus, he is described in a negative light due to Ptolemy's jealousy over him stealing his mistress Thais:

57 Ibid., 272–273.

58 Ibid., 874.

I have said almost nothing of Harpalus. He was a page with us, a young man with us, and he was fanatically loyal to the king. He was sent into exile when many of the rest were, and he was for a long time, Erigyus of Mytilene's lover. He was like Marsyas, a fine fighter, but a better brain, and had quite early taken to mathematics. He almost never accompanied us on campaign in the early years. But he was, almost from the first ascension of Alexander to the throne, his chief treasurer ... In fact I haven't mentioned him because ... how can I put this without seeming cuckold? He never hid his admiration for Thais. And she liked him in a way she didn't like me—as one brain to another, I think. They shared jokes-gossip-and secrets. Together. Without me. To say I hated him is to do all three of us an injustice. But I confess that most of the time I tried to pretend that he didn't exist. But he did.⁵⁹

Cameron however does mention the group of mutilated Greeks, but uses them as a source of motivation, and therefore *inspiration porn* (i.e. the use/reduction of the disabled as/to objects in order to motivate or make able-bodied people feel better about themselves),⁶⁰ for Alexander's men to attack Persepolis so that they did not suffer the same fate:

'Men of Macedon,' the king said. 'The time has come to avenge these men. Look at them well. Professional soldiers—men of Amphipolis and Pella, of Athens and Sparta, of Ionia and Aeolia. Tortured and mutilated by the Persians. *Look at what Persia really is.*' Even as he spoke, the poor miserable things shuffled through the crowd, and more of them emerged from behind the king to stumble or push themselves or drag themselves in among the Macedonians. 'Don't flinch!' the king said. 'Look at them. Had we been defeated at Issus or Arabela, we would have shared this fate. I would be dead, or I would have no lips or ears. This is the *peace* we would have earned from Persia. Ask a Euboean. Ask an Athenian!'⁶¹

Cameron also uses the disturbing scene of a mercy killing from the Oliver Stone movie, again narrated by Ptolemy, "I should have looked to call the troops forward and I should have kept an eye on the archers shooting down from the embrasures, but I let my focus fall on the poor bastard screaming his guts out.

59 Christian Cameron, *Alexander: God of War*. (London: Orion Books, 2012), 565.

60 Stella Young. "We're Not Here for Your Inspiration", *The Drum: Australia Broadcasting Corporation*, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-07-03/young-inspiration-porn/4107006>.

61 Cameron, *Alexander*, 629–630.

I ran to him and killed him—spiked him in the head. He went out like a lamp being blown out. May someone do as much for me.”⁶² This is a direct example of how different sources of media feed off of each other and help to perpetuate misconceptions about the past since the Stone *Alexander* movie was made in 2004, and Cameron’s book in 2012. This example as well as Cameron’s take of the mutilated Greeks are also examples of the perpetuation of the myth that it was better to be dead than disabled in the ancient world and also shows how the erasure of disability can be harmful to history.

All of these portrayals of these particular historical figures surrounding Alexander the Great reveal two things. The first is that popular media, in particular Hollywood, seems to have a bias, whether conscious or unconscious, against the disabled, especially in historical films. Disability in Hollywood seems to either fit into the category of *inspiration porn*, or is not acknowledged at all. The second is that historians also seem to share this bias to a certain extent, not acknowledging disability except for when it cannot be ignored, and being critical of depictions of compassion towards the disabled in the historical record, claiming that it was made up for unknown purposes. As Dr. Fareed Haj wrote in the introduction to his book *Disability in Antiquity* published in 1970:

Even after determining what needed to be done, I found it harder to explore this area than I had anticipated. Historical works provided very sketchy reports of disability. The medical histories I consulted discussed disability only in passing. Not only did they dwell on a medical rather than the societal causes of handicaps, but also the emphasis was not on disability, its extent or its causes, but rather on the historical advance of medical skill, improved prevention methods, and expanded hospital care ... Over the centuries millions of handicapped people have lived and died. They have been a substantial but voiceless minority.⁶³

Garland reaches a similar conclusion in his book *The Eye of the Beholder*, published in 1996: “With a few notable exceptions in the field of art history, the existing scholarship on deformity and disability in the Graeco-Roman world is meagre, despite the current fascination with the body as a cultural construct among anthropologists and classicists with anthropological leanings.”⁶⁴ Unfortunately, nearly 50 years after Haj, and 20 years after Garland, not much has

62 Ibid., 687.

63 Fareed Haj, *Disability in Antiquity*. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1970), 11.

64 Garland, *The Eye of the Beholder*, viii.

changed. Popular historical fiction media does not seem to be much better in this regards either, as it is still acceptable to use those with disabilities as a source of *inspiration porn*, as Cameron does in *God of War*. One has to wonder if these two forms of bias influence and feed off of each other, much like the Greek ourboros, or the three Graiae who pass their singular eye around so that only one of them can see at a time. There seems to be a misconception in the Western world at least, that those with disabilities were ill-treated in the past, when those such as Michel Foucault and Haj argued that this simply was not necessarily the case. However, how can there be blame for this misconception if there are almost no depictions of these individuals in popular media, and those that are portrayed have these conditions minimized, or are instead made able-bodied? Historians also minimize these conditions in those historical figures who they simply cannot ignore, and write off individuals as unimportant in other cases in the overall historical narrative.

We as a society and as historians have to do better. While not a perfect human being, Alexander the Great was ahead of his time in his treatment of those who were disabled and deserves to be recognized for this. Erasing Alexander's more compassionate nature as seen time and time again through his treatment of Arrhidaeus, Harpalus, and the mutilated Greeks in Persia does him an extreme disservice. Historians and others can start correcting this deficit by recognizing and actively searching for those who thus far have been continually erased from the historical narrative.

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